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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

OCTOBER 2 1981

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REFERENCE

E. T. WILLIAMS and C. S. NICHOLLS (Editors):
The Dictionary of National Biography 1961-1970
1,178pp. Oxford University Press.
£40.
0 19 865207 0

For ten years and more the recently deceased eminent of Britain, with a handful of Commonwealth post-graduates, have been eagerly waiting in the cloisters of their Valhalla for the decennial honours list to be posted. The prolonged and judicious sifting of their multifarious claims to commemoration has at last been concluded, and Sir Edgar Williams and his colleague Dr Christine Nicholls have with their customary skill produced a final selection of 745 candidates for entry into the class of 1961-1970 in their Temple of British Worthies that is the Dictionary of National Biography. Some will have been disappointed, but they may find themselves recorded in the selection of *Obituaries from The Times* that was published in 1976; others will have to be content with the brief and often inadequate entries they themselves prepared for *Who's Who*, which were included in the *Who Was Who* volume for the same period (published in 1972). These will have, in the various works of reference, both new and long-established, left a name behind them, and some there be, which have no memorial . . .

For those 745 that have made the grade - many of them obviously famous but others rescued from the obscurity of dimly remembered sporting prowess or evenness theatrical success - inclusion in the DNB will make certain that their names live for evermore. Curators of portrait galleries and registrars of archives will accept the Dictionary's judgment as their yardstick, and posthumous celebrity will be assured by the continuity, consistency and long-recognized authoritativeness of the DNB, to which the present volume forms an impressive supplement.

The mixture is very much the same as before (though there are no archbishops and only minor royalty this time), with a characteristic leaning towards too many upper civil servants (of rather repetitious dill-

gence and probity when considered *en bloc*), and possibly a reluctance to admit many trade unionists. Those taking *sortes* in the middle of the volume may at first think that the whole book consists mainly of geologists (eight of the thirteen geological entries are between F and K), and there are other accidental oddities for the decade, such as four Foxes to only four Smiths. The average age of those with surnames beginning with M and N is nearly 74, that of the A's and B's just over 78: a Permanent Secretary called Arkettall or Bulittude would have a number of advantages, professional and actuarial, in his favour. The youngest subjects are the racing motorist John Clark (aet 32) and the playwright Joe Orton (aet 34); the Egyptologist Dr Margaret Murray (1863-1963) and Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Oliver (1865-1965) are at the other end of the scale. An average age of around 75 is interesting, not merely as an armchair calculation: for the subjects are likely to have been born about 1890, coming to maturity soon after the First, and finding themselves in positions of authority by the time of the Second, World War. A general florescence of, say, 1920 to 1950 is viewed by biographers writing in the late 1970s, and the perspective, whether cultural, scientific or military, is valuable.

Sir Edgar Williams has been editing the decennial supplement since 1949, and recently retired from his task (the 1971-1980 volume, if he has been announced, will be edited by Lord Blake). Sir Edgar's own contributions to this volume are only three - two quite brief, the other the longest in the whole volume, gallantly taken on by himself. All are distinguished. The notice of his predecessor as Secretary of the Rhodes Trustees, Sir Corleone Allen, is notable for a model evocation of the subject's appearance:

Allen was of short, stocky build but impressive appearance. His strong eyes, striking nose, clipped moustache, and magnificent crop of light-white hair (he greyed early) reminded one that he had been a soldier. That he was an Australian might be remarked by the way he wore his hat.

General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart

is treated with a literary gusto appropriate to the career - "pigsticking and polo began to pull" at the opening of his military life, and he continued "the tireless pursuit of snipe and salmon" at its end - but his notice has insight as well as literary stylishness. We are told of this one-legged, one-eyed White's hero that "it was said of him that in the world of action he occupied the sort of niche which Sir Max Beerbohm occupied in the world of letters."

It is of course with Churchill that the editor comes into his own: forty-five columns, where the average is three or four, give plenty of space for the proper deployment of that vast career. A not-too-solemn tone is set from the opening.

He first saw action in Cuba on his twenty-first birthday and reported it for the *Daily Graphic*. For the rest of his life he was able to keep himself by his journalism, took a siesta in the afternoon, and smoked cigars.

An economical reference system places in brackets throughout the text citations of current literature (and very up to date they are, including Lady Soames's biography of her mother), in a way that recalls the practice of the original *Dictionary*, and the whole entry is very well paced, getting its subject to the Admiralty at barely forty without too much rush, and (perhaps too summarily) condensing his final administration to less than a page, leaving plenty of room for the grandest strategy of Second World War leadership. The genius is never underestimated, even when it was an annoyance.

He could and did waste the time of busy exports by harebrained interventions, impatient short cuts, and chimerical projects so that the central machinery operated betimes in a series of judders. Yet within it might be detected - at least in retrospect - a corrective mechanism, Ismay on the military and Bridges on the civilian side as governors, which managed to prevent disaster without subduing the incredible impetus which Churchill's genius elicited.

The "abundant fancy" of the great man, stimulated by the "huge and welcome responsibility of war leadership" is excellently conveyed in an

essay that finds due place for Churchill's daily routines as well as for the highest hurdens of command.

The long political articles are nearly all very well done, with several Commonwealth prime ministers whose notices give us virtually an entire political history of their countries in their years of power. The entry on Nehru (by T. H. Beagle-hole) is notably good, and its later pages provide one of several reminders - naval and strategic, as well as Indian - that the Mountbatten article in the next volume should be one of the most prominent, and to be looked forward to. At home, Maurice Shock on Attlee is first-rate, bringing out the peculiar strengths of "the leading example in modern times of a politician who achieves high office against all expectations, only then to reveal unanticipated talents." The late John Mockintosh's article on Herbert Morrison is well balanced, and though in the end highly critical, manages to be fairly minded about the less fortunate incidents in his career, such as the For- eign Secretaryship, roundly dismissed as "a disaster" in the Attlee article earlier. Other biographies of younger politicians who died with ambitions unfulfilled include a disappointingly short entry on Gaitskell - a study in aspirations rather than achievements, and therefore to be dealt with briefly - while Iain Macleod is dealt with at almost twice the length, Sir Ian Gilmour's excellent essay finding space for budgetary analysis as well as an admission of the mistrust his subject generated.

Outside the political and military entries, Bertrand Russell gets one of the longest articles. Anthony Quinton has been given fourteen columns for his excellent notice, which incorporates a witty discussion of Russell's love affairs alongside lucid explanations of his work on Peano and Frege, and his subject's "years of unrelenting thought of the most powerful originality at the outer limits of abstraction". Mr Quinton points to the qualities that give the *History of Western Philosophy* both its limitations and its appeal:

By no means a scholarly work it combines lively passages on philosophical themes of the past where they happen to have caught Russell's interest, entertaining biographical material rather than the manner of G. H. Lewes, and amusingly processed historical matter of only the most marginal relevance to his main exposition derived from readily accessible sources.

When Quinton comes to the political activities of Russell's final years, he roundly (and rightly) condemns Ralph Schoenman's discreditable stage-management of the nonagenarian activist. "Letters written in villainously sub-literate American English appeared over Russell's signature in *The Times*", but after the "war crimes trial", Russell's dismissal, immediately before his death, of his increasingly embarrassing adviser, is duly recorded.

The Russell essay sets his philosophical work in a proper context for a general readership, and most of the other notices of scientists and scholars in this volume also attempt to show the importance of their subjects' technical work. One virological notice refers to "blood platelets and purpura" without explanation, only to inform us in the next paragraph that foot-and-mouth is "this important disease of farm animals"; but such misplaced generalizations are rare. It is of course true that even with the best of explanations many of these researches will remain opaque to the outsider, but it is at least possible to see from several examples what scientists mean by a "beautiful experiment". The mathematical examples are necessarily incomprehensible to laymen, but can sometimes be illuminated by metaphor. J. C. Burkill (on A. E. Ingham) writes easily of an elementary but unprovable problem in the properties of numbers:

Searches for a rigorous proof lead to complex analysis of the Hardy-Littlewood pattern. In these endeavours mathematicians may be likened to mountaineers who establish camps at increasing heights striving to reach a summit.

A few words of general introduction are always welcome, whether for Glenny and Immunization, Florey and penicillin, Clive Bell and "Significant Form", Liddell Hart and his "indirect approach", or "expanding torrent", or Sir John Beazley's classifications of Greek vase paintings which "left the subject, which he had

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Cambridge Studies in Linguistics 33

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found more or less chaotic, an unorganized field of study comparable to a school of painting in a documented age.

The Second World War itself provides its technicalities as well as its strategic and political history. Alongside the concerted political criticisms of Winterton and Shinnell acting together as "Arsenic and Old Lace" or the excitements of naval battles (parts of the Cunningham of Hyndhope notice have the symmetrical excitement of a nursery game of Battleships), there is the scientific contribution from Purton Down, and Geoffrey Morant's useful anthropometric researches into the body measurements of aircrew, which provided specifications for better-fitting flying kit.

There is also the Top Secret angle. Kenneth Bird (the cartoonist "Fougasse") drew innumerable technical diagrams for classified naval handbooks, "so secret that he said he had to draw them with his eyes shut". Eyes have only just been opened. The ancient historian Sir Frisak Adcock, now known to have been the whipper-in of the large Cambridge contingent of cryptographers working on "Ultra" material at Bletchley, is mentioned only as "having reverted to wartime duties in a branch of the Foreign Office", but there is much about Bletchley in the account of Alastair Denniston, and F. L. Lucas was another of the team whose vital work can also now be referred to in the military and naval archives. In other secret war work, Thomas Harris's career in intelligence is discussed rather allusively (Anthony Blunt might have given us just a sentence to explain what form the invaluable double-cross "Operation Garbo" actually took). The greatest mystery in the volume is the notice of Sir Stewart Menzies, "C" of the Secret Intelligence Service, which, uniquely, unsigned, "Private information; personal knowledge" remain very private and personal.

The literary entries are usually well done, but they show an almost capricious variation in length. T. S. Eliot's notice, by Professor Richard Ellmann, is the longest (at seven-and-a-half columns), and contains some concise and fresh criticism of the whole oeuvre. A. G. Street is in proportion at one-and-three-quarter columns. But Sean O'Casey and Siegfried Sassoon are equal at two-and-a-half columns. The Sitwells (Edith and Osbert) get three each, Aldous Huxley has four-and-a-quarter (an excellent essay by the late Ian Parsons), Louis MacNeice has six and E. M. Forster, and D. H. Lawrence, have seven. This gradation presumably does not reflect a scale of values, as they vary very much in technique; selecting specimen works from a consistent series for Dama Ivy Compton-Burnett means that she can be dealt with in two columns – both economical of space and critically appropriate. Percy Lubbock – a life and output not exactly throbbing with incident – is accorded almost as much space as E. M. Forster, and Aldington in the ration list. The Forster article (by Lord Annan) is well done, but concentrates a little too much on the subject's beliefs rather than on the writings. It is a pity that though "accord only to D. H. Lawrence, Forster was the most important British novelist of his generation", he is accorded less than four columns of *Dictionary* space.

Forster's homosexuality is straightforwardly but delicately touched on in this first *DNB* volume to have "come out". This is a salutary change, though in a notice like Somerset Maugham's it has been so discreetly done, merely by glancing references to a companion and a private secretary, as to be almost invisible. Without this adjustment it would have been impossible to have included Joe Orton at all, or to have linked the two Robert's, the painter Colquhoun and MacBryde (under the name heading: in the way that Harold and Laura Knight are commemorated). Harold and Nicolaus and Vilea Sackville-West are (separately in "out") and there is a refreshing comment that "Gavin Maxwell was to fact a bisexual, but in his leaning to adolescents of his own gender he was gentle in his affection, and many gained sophis-

tication and wisdom from his patronage".

Heterosexual relationships are also treated with greater frankness, even when denials are called for, as with Nancy Astor and Lord Lothian, or with Stanley Morison and Beatrice Warde ("a close relationship, undoubtedly amorous but as certainly chaste"), or John Ireland's unsummarized and rapidly unsummarized marriage. Mistresses are not usually mentioned, except in those with well-developed phenomenological lobes of amativeness (Edward Gordon Craig still remained "a handsome smoozer" at sixty); Sir Allen Lane's attachments are covered only in the biography adduced as an authority. We learn of Lord Crookshank, the Conservative politician, that "his grievous wounds prevented him from living a full private life: he was a bachelor"; but rumour of ill is the comment on the chemical engineer T. R. C. Fox that "He never married which was a pity for he showed great consideration for those around him and was the kindest of men; but marriage is not for perfectionists".

Frankness is even more important in the general assessments of characters than the traditional form of *DNB* notices. There are now very few of the conventional phrases of immediately posthumous regret that are more appropriate in newspaper obituaries. The summings-up in this volume do not, probably should not, attempt "the final human judgement" on their subjects, as mentioned by one contributor, but they can be valuable when not obscured by the polite reservations which reveal more than they conceal. "Nor were his relations as uniformly harmonious . . ."; "outside the circle of his immediate colleagues he had a reputation for being difficult"; "he had an almost mischievous sense of humour" – such phrases have an unhelpful flabbiness about them, and it is better to be told straight out about defects. The geneticist R. A. Fisher's "juvenile verbal comments were well known; though frequently made without malice, they were nevertheless disconcerting to those of less robust temperament"; of D. W. E. Henderson, the gem-wearer scientist, we learn that "by nature a prima donna he could be forthright, sometimes rude, and occasionally plainly offensive"; and James Haden Gwynne-Vaughan "appeared to lack humility and scorned to use her charm".

It is not just the disagreeable traits of character that should be frankly dealt with: favourable attributes must also be displayed. There are standard virtues for the course, not to be discounted because they are so commonly to be found in these notices – humour, resolution, diligence, fair-mindedness, detachment of humbug, neatness and dexterity are frequently mentioned, but even where a man really is a paragon such qualities have to be selected judiciously, lest the pudding appear over-egged. Sir John Lockwood, university administrator, has such a list:

He was readily accessible to all staff, students, and strangers. A Christian, he was renowned for certain qualities displayed everywhere at home or abroad, and some thought, shown at their best in the team-work of committees: stamina, courage, persistence; gentleness, sympathy, bonhomie; objectivity, thoroughness, conciseness; skill, diplomacy, and leadership of a new kind.

"Some thought", to mention the literary disadvantages of such an assemblage, where the instruction "perm any three notices to mind, is not to deny the possibility that they may have existed in one man. But the reader is set on his guard, as with a paragraph about Kingsley Martin (which is immediately followed by an "On the other hand . . .").

In politics, Martin was always a mixed-up Peter Pan. He was clever but confused; bright on top, gloomy below; saw problems as polygons to which he had usually at least two, and frequently changing, solutions; kept all *communi* with the *fact* (a favourite joke), but was a very bad opportunist (joked the strength of mind to form firm and consistent judgements, and to a great extent trained a team of brilliant writers, but picked some

distinctly odd advisers; was often sloppy rather than scholarly; had little interest in "practical politics"; was valiant for truth, but not above an occasional suppression of it for the sake of a cause; struck more often than not a querulous rather than a positive note.

A much happier listing is found in Kenneth Rose's notice of the industrialist Sir Frederick Hooper, of Schweppes:

"Eric" Hooper held, indeed he flourished, opinions not always found in a boardroom. He had a particular regard for trade-unionists, journalism, the regular army, the wines of St. Emilion, the brisk wit of the United States, and the therapeutic qualities of egg farming. He detested tax fiddlers, pop singers, ostentation, and the fizzy drinks on which the prosperity of the firm depended. He collected modern pictures, designed a beautiful garden at his house in Kent, and loved the ballet. He also supported the contemporary theatre both as a patron and as an increasingly disenchanted playgoer. A tall, heavily built man with several chins, he was nevertheless a nimble ballroom dancer, and a cunning but sometimes bad-tempered tennis player.

It does not always need a Schweppes-erect listing like that to convey a character. A few words will sometimes do the trick – one subject's playing "enthusiastically bad bridge", or Beaverbrook's "impetuous generosity" to the University of New Brunswick are brief and telling, and we learn that "Victor" Gollancz was a man of extreme contrasts, polarities of feeling manifest in his behaviour which, in moments of insight, he found irreconcilable to the point of illness. Space is required for the satisfactory coverage of political and military careers, but concision usually improves the definition of "character" in these notices.

Appearance, too, is usually mentioned, most commonly in a few words about height or bearing, or in the case of Sir Thomas Becon, shape:

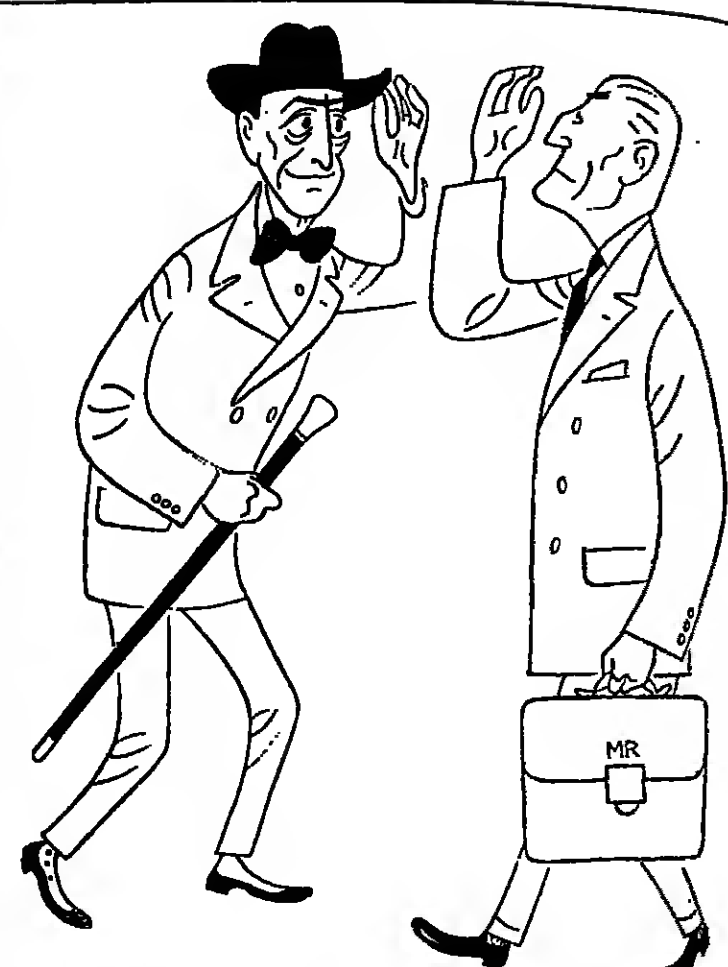
With the passing years the figure became stouter, but Becon was never anything like a fat man, and to the very end he presented an impressive pair of shoulders to orchestrate the world over. Sitting down at this time he seemed gigantic; it was when he stood that he was revealed as a very short man – his legs were surprisingly short, belying every other physical aspect of this remarkable man. One feature remained constant through the years – the large and lustrous eyes, set once the agents of fear and confidence in the hearts of the players who faced him, and possibly the most important tool in his conducting equipment.

Dress usually only comes in where the subjects are sartorially the last of their line: Sir Albert Richardson had something of the air of an old-fashioned actor, and the portrait painter Frank Salisbury (d. 1962) who was always immaculately dressed and favoured a very high collar with a dark coloured cravat, which emphasized his consciously Victorian appearance.

There seems to be a general reticence about money, prosperity usually being mentioned without specific figures. Professor Houston continues the interesting practice of his *Lives of the Lord Chancellors* by detailing the probable value of Lord Kilmorey's estate (£22,202 in 1967), but now that estate duty avoidance precautions are so general these formerly revealing figures are of little real value. It might, however, be useful (if the books have survived) to be told what sort of income important baronists were earning at the height of their lucrative practices, and literary earnings of some interest.

The only author whose financial affairs are discussed in any detail here is Charles Harold St. John Hamilton; his earnings as "Frank Hamilton" stood before the Second World War at over £2,500 a year, although "he had spent freely and helped to sustain the casinos of Europe".

Death and illness are also conspicuously treated, although Richard Dimbleby's cancer and the reduction in popular tabloids about the disease



"Hi ya! Said Ravel to de Falla. Poley. You well? Said de Falla to Ravel. Neither liked to confess that he couldn't cure less" – a verse and illustration (above) by Nicolas Bentley for the Saturday Book, selections from which are now reprinted in *The Best of the Saturday Book* (see caption on p. 1120 for publication details).

which his death occasioned are specifically mentioned. So is J. B. S. Haldane's ailment, he having written some gruesome verses deliberately to allay public inhibitions about the disease ("Oh would I had the pen of Homer, to sing of rectal carcinoma"). Fortunately not quoted here. Some good ends are mentioned: a man who died after a happy family party for his eightieth birthday, or the trout-fishing Metropolitan magistrate (he of the "enthusiastically bad bridge"), who at Stockbridge on the Test "during the trout fishing season, spent nearly all his days; there, one June evening, he scored a record high of trout. The next day he died quietly in his chair, watching Wimbledon on television".

As a recipe for living rather than dying, we might follow Lord Ingleby, whose disappointing notice (by no means the equal of Lord Trenchard's) to his successors Bridges and Normanbrook, each of them an essay in official and constitutional history and practice) is alleviated by a description of his regimen:

His religion was of the type known as "muscular Christianity". He took a cold bath every morning, was an advocate of alfresco meals in unwelcome weather, he was persistent in physical exercise, and his favourite method of locomotion was on his feet. He was a man of temperate habits. He preferred a diet of whole-meal bread, raw vegetables, fresh fruit, eggs, and nuts, and this sustained him in full vigour until he was eighty-six.

One now takes the usual practices of the *DNB* for granted, but they have been carefully worked out, and are essential to the proper registration of the entries. The pre-dates and ancestry (in which as in so much else the *DNB* wins hands down over *Who Was Who* and *The Times*) is essential, and consistent placing makes it easy to chart the subject's progress by age (admission as FRS, promotion to Brigadier, etc). The cross-references to the main work and the previous supplementary volumes are useful, though the text is rather too liberally peppered with [q.v.s. It is useful to have Sir Basil Hennessey placed in this way, or Aldous Huxley and Leonard Woolf related to their intellectual circles, but it was surely superfluous to add a bracketed cross-reference to Thomas Hobbes when he was cited for too portentously in the article on H. M. Bateman.

The biographical note which customarily concludes each entry is

less closely tied to artistic representations. [Louis MacNeice is the only subject in this decade for whom a death-mask is recorded], and photographs have begun to be admitted as likenesses. One special matter the publisher and editors might give some thought to for future volumes is the brief description of publicly available archive material relating to their subjects. Some of the notices use documentary sources whose location remains unrevealed, and guidance to the principal *MacNeice* that have already been permanently placed in public repositories would be helpful. We have the five volumes of *Letters in British Political History 1901-1951* (1975-8) and the resources of the national registers of archives at our disposal, but it might be useful to have brief guidance to the whereabouts of, say, Hugh Dalton's diaries (LSE) or Admiral Lord Cunningham's papers (British Library) or Dean Newlett Johnson's (Kent University Library), at the conclusion of the articles themselves.

With so wide a range of subject matter, it is virtually impossible for a single reviewer to gauge the amount of major error of fact or emphasis. Looking at the volume merely from a bibliographical point of view, we do not have separate chapters devoted to them, but receive summary treatment in chapters dealing with similar occurrences: Winsford (1962) falls just outside the period covered by this book, but is included with Winsford (1948); and Weedon (1915) is dealt with in a new chapter on the Settle accident of 1960, the last major disaster involving steam-hauled trains, but omitted by Hamilton.

Malcolm Gerard has done his adaptation skilfully, but the need to abridge drastically the original text has resulted in the omission of important and interesting material. No mention is made of the bearing of the accidents recorded upon the development of safety devices on the railway. The significant emergence of trade-union power in the intervention of Mr J. H. Thomas in the inquiries following the Als Gill (1913) and Abernethy (1921) accidents is not brought out; and some colourful incidents are passed over.

The text is illustrated with reproductions of six of the original photographs and thirty-six new ones. There are also five new track layout diagrams, and one (Hull, Paragon) is taken from the original work. Since five diagrams had to be newly drawn for the present publication, it is regrettable that they do not conform to common practice – it is not usual to

and the less important subjects could be endlessly debated. A look at the *MS* in the *Times* *Obituaries* volume for the same period shows only a few possible, although the international scope of the *Times* volume produces a host of ineligibles like Jayne Mansfield, Chien and Harpo Marx, Grandma Moses and Mrs Molotov. But what about Archbishop Mannix, John MacCormick (the Scottish Nationalist), Dean Milner-White and Max Miller? Some of these might have replaced the dozen or so possible deletions I marked (not including a clutch of only marginally eligible scientists in the later T's, perhaps noted merely in exhaustion or impatience). Some of them seem, even as presented in the *Dictionary*, to deserve no real place in it. The range of possibilities is so large that it only increases one's admiration for the editorial decisiveness that has produced the volume at an appropriate length.

The *Dictionary of National Biography* will not normally be read right through, although a consecutive approach has special rewards for the persistent, for the "Curious Crow, Tunbridge Wells" (Christopher Hussey's *unus-de-plume* when writing to *Country Life* at the time that he was editor of the magazine). Minor details are constantly rewarding. It was good to be reminded that Attlee had an Oxford half-blue for billiards ("the sole game for which he had skill"); or to learn that Bud Flanagan, of Flanagan and Allen, was originally Chaim Keven Weintraub, taking the name Flanagan in Cruikshank's keeping the series up to date, and considering its bulk (1,123 pages of text followed by over fifty of cumulative index for all the supplements 1901-1970), even at £40 it is a bargain.

Off the rails

By Sherwin Bailey

J. A. B. HAMILTON:
Trains to Nowhere
British Steam Train Accidents 1906-1960
Edited by Malcolm Gerard
96pp. Allen and Unwin. £6.95.
0 04 385084 7

This book, in the publishers' "Steam" series, is an adaptation of the late J. A. B. Hamilton's *British Railway Accidents of the Twentieth Century*, published in 1967. It has been much reduced in length in order to conform to the series. This has necessitated the omission of five accidents: Hall Road (1905), Elliot Junction (1906), Ditton Junction (1912), Darlington (1928), Welwyn Garden City (1935), together with South Crofton (1947), which does not qualify for inclusion, being a collision between electric trains. Two other accidents recorded by Mr Hamilton do not have separate chapters devoted to them, but receive summary treatment in chapters dealing with similar occurrences: Winsford (1962) falls just outside the period covered by this book, but is included with Winsford (1948); and Weedon (1915) is dealt with in a new chapter on the Settle accident of 1960, the last major disaster involving steam-hauled trains, but omitted by Hamilton.

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whose pleasure was in caged birds", or that Unions the leviathan of makers; and cheering that an organic chemist experimenting with methyl ethyl silicic acid, of necessity working out of doors because it has "one of the most offensive smells known and can be detected in remarkably low concentrations", close the day of a Dorset century garden party nearby, and had to complete his synthesis in the fens. And it was pleasant to discover a really excellent notice of George Formby (by Frank Muir) which brilliantly analyses his toothy charm and small accomplishments, and admits a defective technique with "the ukelele-hanjo – a dreadful instrument which combined the imprecision of the ukelele with the loudness of the banjo".

1961-1970 takes us in 745 easy stiges from Abbey the hitherto Brighton brewer to York the advanced architectural advocate. Whether one is searching for Alexander of Hillsborough or Alexander of Tunis, Douglas of Kirtleside or Dowling, Kemsley or Beaverbrook, Sir Bruce Ingram or Sir Bruce Richmond, Richmond Crompton or End Blyton, Jack Hylton or Jack Payne, Low or Vicky, one will not be disappointed – nor for Admirals Meade-Fetherstonhaugh or Plunkett-Erle-Drax. The volume has come out rather later than its predecessors, but the delay has not been beyond the term of patient waiting, and the result has been well worth waiting for. It will be an essential purchase for practically all reference libraries keeping the series up to date, and considering its bulk (1,123 pages of text followed by over fifty of cumulative index for all the supplements 1901-1970), even at £40 it is a bargain.

Her brother's sister

By Rosemary Dinnage

SUSAN CHITTY:
Gwen John
1876-1939
223pp. Haddard and Stoughton. 19.95.
0 340 24480 1

"Augustus John's sister" would probably still be most people's reaction to Gwen John's name (though Augustus wrote that in fifty years' time he would only be remembered as Gwen's brother. For someone interested in collecting or trading in pictures – price levels being a fascinating if disreputable aspect of modern art – she could have been bought up twenty years ago; John Rothenstein's statement in his introductory chapter of her reputation is not yet established is partly helped by the fact that as long ago as 1968 small gouaches valued at around £100 began to fetch £2,000 apiece. For those who associate her chiefly with the severe self-portrait in the Tate she may have a governess, spinsterish Jane Eyre image – which in a sense is accurate enough. A Brontë heroine might well, in the Paris art world of the Nineties, have thrown off her clothes at a party to show that she had the figure for a model, or slept in the woods for a week outside her lover's house to catch a glimpse of him.

Augustus, famous for womanizing and drink and Bohemian outrageousness, shared with his sister a certain commitment to truth, and his summing-up of her (not quoted by Susan Chitty) says the essential. "Gwen and I were not opposites but the same really, but we took a different attitude", he wrote. "I am rarely 'exuberant'. She was always so; latterly in a tragic way. She wasn't chaste or subdued, but amorous and proud. She didn't steal through life but preserved a haughty independence which people mistook for humility. Her passions for both men and women were outrageous and irrational. She was never 'unnoticed' by those who had access to her."

As Susan Chitty says, what biographer would not welcome such a subject? But the sister of one, had a long love affair with Rodin and also became a religious recluse, died an extraordinary death, and was an important artist herself. The passionate and perfectionist Gwen John, however, might not have welcomed her biographer as warmly. It seems unkind to criticize any biographer – all that research, all those acknowledgements – but standards of biography have become so high in recent years that *pour encourager les autres* is only fair to say that Susan Chitty has not really risen to her subject. No matter that she scarcely discusses Gwen John's work except to quote someone's opinion that this or that picture is a fine one; the book is a life, not art history. But the deadly lack of distinction in her style (Gwen John had "a lifelong affair with flowers", Rodin's bust of her has a "veiled, quiescent calm", and on his visits "all too soon the hour of ecstasy on the mahogany bed was over") has the effect of blunting her subject's intensities and making it all rather dull. This is aggravated by her handling of Gwen John's letters to Rodin, of which there are apparently about 2,000 housed at the Musée Rodin. They are in French, of course, but with or without translation, direct quotation would surely have been better than passages like: "Now he who was interested in all beauty made the world beautiful to her. With mysterious words he, a man, had broken the walls of her prison. He was more than her master, he was her god."

When she wrote that she was "born to love" she may have been right; but it is hard to imagine what she might have made of marriage or a more suitable lover. As it was, total dependence on Rodin coexisted with the "haughty independence" her brother described. Amorous and not, in fact Rodin's brief sketch of his subject's sister catches her personality more clearly than this book

succeeds in doing. We need, too, to be told something about Rodin, the pivot of Gwen John's life: was he as callous an elderly seducer of virgins as he appears, and if so why? And after his death, did she really become – as Susan Chitty suggests without adducing evidence – "a contemplative so lost in solitude that she did not always know reality from fantasy"? When she impressed people as possessing some of the calm of her pictures was this as Augustus John's assessment suggests, purely in the eye of the sentimental beholder? Was there, rather, something a little coy and self-regarding in her later perception of herself, or is this a product of heavy-handed half-translation? The picture remains blurred.

The four John children had grown up unmothered, Augusta John being much away taking cures for a mysterious Victorian illness of which she died when Gwen was eight. They were not unfathered, but evidently wished they were, and spent their lives in flight from Edwin John's repressive personality. Thornton and Winifred escaped to unconventional lives in America, and in old age Thornton was writing that Augustus was still "trying to solve the mystery of our father's character". What they did have was the wild Penbroskeshire countryside: Gwen liked to swim naked, and off the most dangerous rocks. It is always a surprise to be reminded by fiction how much the corrected nineteenth-century woman walked and rode and climbed (Elizabeth Benson, the muddy petticoat, even the Princess Cusamassu walking from Camberwell to Paddington); and Gwen John, spending all her adult life in Paris, nevertheless often lived like the gipsy Augustus pretended to be. How many rucksacked travellers today manage to spend their nights in the Luxembourg Gardens, how many pram-pushers even (she took a hand with one of Augustus's children) sit down on doorsteps when tired?

At the Slade, where at nineteen she was allowed to follow Augustus, she was considered talented but subordinate to the brilliant brother. There were various "controversies and irrational" passions for both men and women; and in 1904 occurred the extraordinary involvement with Augustus and Dorella, the mysterious Dorella of innumerable Augustus John portraits whose mind seems to have been as blank as her body was beautiful. Augustus and his wife Ida had already settled for a *ménage à trois* with Dorella; then Gwen "eloped" with her and set out to walk from Bordenux to Rome (they got as far as Torquay). Later in Paris, Dorella really did elope from the John family with a young sailor; but Gwen, who had shared her father out of remorse with one of her contemporaries, was "at her most formidable when tearing lovers apart", as Susan Chitty says. With a steeliness that none of the others possessed, she enticed Dorella back to Augustus. Ida made way for Dorella by dying three years later, aged thirty-four.

There is the same steeliness in the letter to Rodin in which Gwen John advises him not to waste energy on condolences for Ida but to save it for their next lovemaking. The brazen Gwen John is hard to discern in the Tate self-portrait (she was virtual twenty-four when she painted it); her letters to the old man, often written at the rate of three a day, some addressed directly to him and some to an imaginary "Julie", were feverish, gross, adoring. At times their hed at his studio was shared with another mistress. A Finnish sculptress: "Aren't you ashamed to stand naked before that inn?" asked one of the lesbian artists Gwen John posed for. "Oh no", she answered, "I like it very much."

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three-year gap in the relationship, and finally his death – she was thrown further into isolation. She called this being "tired": "I had a tiring life for some years and so seem only now to begin to paint" (1914); "when one gets tired one loses something which one never gets back" (after his death). A particularly curious thing, in such a mastery of line, is the change in her handwriting shown in facsimiles of letters written before and after the first break with Rodin – from crisply adult to pathetically schoolgirlish. Susan Chitty says that the latter became her habitual handwriting.

Presumably her hand simply went on knowing what it had to do when she drew. She wrote to a friend about a "quiet past of her mind" where art was, that was undisturbed by all the rest. It was the need to safeguard this, clearly, that made her so reclusive from all except the few people who did not jar on her. With her it is even harder than with most artists to connect the life with the serene works; while she steadily assumed the role of half-survived, caricatured English spinster, the pictures still continued, slowly, to be produced. During the 1930s, Susan Chitty says, they grew smaller and smaller and more repetitive in theme, but only in the last few years of her life did she stop working. The sense of awe that Whistler admired was never shaken (and happily there are enough colour reproductions in the book to give an idea of it). Nor was her control of form. She scribbled to herself: "I'm sorry you say I'm so simple and strong. The short strong stalks of flowers. Don't be afraid of falling into mediocrity. You would never."

One would like to see more of the pictures and sculptures of Gwen John herself; she must be one of the most painted of painters, for from the time she refused her father's allowance (he told her the dress she had specially sewn for his visit looked like a prostitute's) she was dirt-poor. For many years, until subsidized by the American collector John Quinn, she was an artist's model who also painted a little. But though she posed naked for a number of "trist-raters", she never herself drew a man; though she scrutinized the world so carefully, down to the colour of "the little ball holding the snowdrop petals", her subjects usually look obliquely away from the spectator. A Rodin "Muse", for which she was the model, looks downward in the same way. It was left unfinished, unmiss, and only recently cast.

"Acid" was Quinn's word for what he looked for in pictures. "There is no harshness, no acid, no pain in his work", he wrote of Augustus John. "Fine draughtsmanship is not enough." There is certainly harshness and pain in reading about Gwen John's death; perhaps to her it felt peaceful and welcome. When the Second World War broke out, she tried to leave Paris, Augustus, on holiday in Provence with a selection of his grown children, had whistled past the city without stopping, and caught the last boat. His sister got as far as Dieppe and collapsed in the street; being without luggage she was assumed to be a derelict and taken to the Hospice de Dieppe. There she died, and the whereabouts of her grave is unknown. Augustus was to have designed a gravestone, but never got it done.

God's Gift: A Living History of Dulwich College (310pp. Heinemann. £10.50. 0 435 32450 0) has recently been published. No full-scale history of the school has appeared since that of William Young nearly a century ago, and the author, Sheila Hodges, has devoted most of the present volume to the period since 1857, the date when Edward Aylmer's chatty was reconstituted by Act of Parliament. In barely chapters she examines the changes in the school under three Victorian and Edwardian headmasters: Carver, Weldon and A. H. Gilkes – and continues with an account of the period 1914-75, ending with a chapter on present-day Dulwich. Games and Field Sports receive separate treatment, as does one of the College's principal ornaments, the Picture Gallery.

Graphs of innocence and guilt

By Thomas Sutcliffe

PATRICIA HIGSMITH:
The Black House
258pp. (Heinemann). £6.95.
034 33518 5

So far as I know none of Patricia Highsmith's previous reviewers have been psychopaths or schizophrenics, and yet her considerable critical reputation rests largely on the supposed accuracy with which she represents states of mental disease. It's certainly true that her novels are plotted as precisely as graphs (they often have the form of exponential curves mounting through imperceptible gradations) and there is a scientific force in the way that she characteristically traces one line only, a single obsessive consciousness which disappears beyond the axes of reason and time into derangement or death. She achieves her effects by what amounts to an obsessive notation of every point at which her characters shift from innocence to guilt, and because of the repetitiveness of her prose, the narcissistic provision of detail, from a killer's thoughts as he acts to the quality and origin of the wine he drinks, it's tempting to classify her merits as somehow scientific rather than artistic.

The prize is justified but misses the point, for although her style often has the self-conscious, observant flatness of a case history (it is connected as well with the reservation of moral judgment), she isn't a psychologist; her achievement is one of imagination rather than documentation. The steeper sections of those curves are extrapolated from statistics of crimes we all know. The uneasy, disquieting force of her novels derives in part from an inevitable inaccuracy, from the fact that her account of criminal madness is inspired guesswork from somewhere firmly this side of sanity.

In fact what she observes so truthfully is not the collapse of reason but its persistence. In what it seems to us to think of as inappropriate conditions. Even Ripley, the least scrupulous and likable of her central characters, has motives for his actions, and though they are venal and vicious they are not irrational. Her suburban killers remain calculatingly evasive until the end (death follows

death for the sake of concealment rather than gratification). They don't hear voices and they don't have fun. Indeed in the act of killing their attitude is one of dispassionate detachment, of a sustained attempt to rationalize the intolerable. Victor Van Allen, in *Deep Water*, finds himself drowning his wife's latest lover, an unappealing bar-room pianist.

It's a joke, Vic thought to himself. If he were to let him up now it would merely be a joke, though perhaps a rough one, but just then De Lisle's efforts grew violent, and Vic concentrated his own effort, one hand on the back of De Lisle's neck now, his other hand holding De Lisle's wrist away from him under the water.

In *This Sweet Sickness* David Kelsey kills his wife accidentally, but behaves with exasperated decency until he finds out that he is really dead, not just unconscious.

In one of her best novels, *Tremor of Forgery*, we, like the protagonist, can never be finally sure whether the dominating murder has even taken place or not. In all the books death is contingent and unsought, almost never meticulously planned and very rarely the focus for our moral indignation. Patricia Highsmith discards one of the traditional pleasures of crime fiction, the lingering scrutiny of the techniques of murder (her most ghoulish touches come in the slightest short stories), and she repudiates its traditional certainties: that sin, crime and illegality can be taken as broadly synonymous.

By doing so she is able to write, not about what it feels like to be mad, but what it feels like to remain sane while committing the actions of a madman. At the same time she calls into question the complacent distinction between "us" and "them" which makes it possible to praise her only for a convincing pathology.

The stories in *The Black House* are closer to the themes and methods of her novels than those in earlier collections, the horror frivolity of *The Animal Lover's Book of Beasts* and the sparse and hateful case histories in *Little Tales of Misogyny*. The short story often has in promise more than it can deliver, and there is, in my case, less opportunity for conveying the retarded drag of time which makes the novels an unsettling (they aren't easy or fast reading). As a result

some of the less successful stories have an unsatisfactory portentousness; a confined tale about a lonely boy swept away by a giant kite like his under, or *The Black House* itself, which describes the dangers of destroying people's myths, are both stories which finally seem to be puzzles rather than problems.

The best however are brilliant essays on the moral concerns of the longer works: fear and loathing, moral absolutism and culpability. They are located too in the same bleak territory of disavowed sanity and doubt, suburbs with swimming pools but no churches. It's significant, in fact, that the nearest thing to virtue in the entire book is the expression of guilt. In such a world crime becomes a matter of personal taste.

'Mr. Dickinson was provoked seriously - and the man who got killed seems to have been a creep!'

'That's not the way the law looks at it.' Michael said with a very smile. 'Lot's of people are provoked seriously. And a human life is a human life.'

'We're not the law,' said Phyllis, as if they were something superior to the law just then.

The characters in "Something the Cat Dragged In" are debating whether to conceal or denounce a murderer.

By Marigold Johnson
LYNNE REID BANKS:
Defy the Wilderness
288pp. Chatto and Windus. £6.95.
0 7011 2593 4

As anyone knows who has followed Lynne Reid Banks further than *The L-Shaped Room*, her passionate involvement with Israel became and remains a constant literary theme. Indeed, *Defy the Wilderness* is a fictional re-product of historical research into the first Arab-Israeli war. If it sounds disparaging to call a powerful and professional novel a "by-product", the author can be blamed, for telling us about its conception, and still more for clarifying in the first few pages precisely how we are to regard her heroine Ann - as a non-Jewish writer from England (with love of thick long hair and a loose Indian dress, as in the jacket photograph), revisiting Jerusalem after fourteen years to research a book "showing all sides" of that early war.

It is bold of Miss Reid Banks to try disarming criticism by "quoting" from Ann's very English husband's letter about one of her "fans". "She's a very well-read old thing and discriminating," she said. I wish you'd persuade your clever wife to get back to writing ordinary English novels. I've nothing against the Jews at all, but she is getting to be a wee bit of a bore about them, don't you think? You'll be gratified to hear that I went into a long harangue in your defence, saying how few novelists these days had commitments (sic) of any kind.

Despite the Israeli habit of talking serious argumentative politics before breakfast, Ann's "commitments" are not only to her research. The friends of her youthful, idealistic six years on a kibbutz are all there to bombard her with the tense and exciting emotions she had forgotten. "One could get swamped here so easily. Swamped in people's feelings, their pasts, their stories, their politics, their psychoses. In their Jewishness."

There is Ruth, struggling bravely to hold on to her progressive conscience, which no longer allows her to go into the Old City because "this year we have settlements all over Samaria and Judea and they hate us worse than they did before"; there is Amnon, the dapper, hospitable little director of a fringe theatre, once an Arab restaurant, to which good moderate Jews feel they should go, even if only to watch a troupe of Americans

What the cat has dragged in, during a game of scrabble, are two fingers and a section of palm hacked from a human hand with a hillbark. Amateur detection leads to a decent local farmer who, having killed one of his labourers for embezzling him, confesses and throws himself on the mercy of those who share his secret. The pursuit and debate are fairly routine but its real power lies in the way a quiet conspiracy grows in the space between public statutes and private emotion. The final line makes it clear that the conspiracy is likely to be successful, and that we needn't hope for a poetic justice to intervene to protect our sensibilities. Crime does go undetected and unpunished and it does so because of our infinite capacity to offer private pleas of mitigation.

Sometimes we are invited to participate more directly in the conspiracy. In "Old Folks at Home" two elderly people to live in their Connecticut home. Mamie and Albert, incontinent, toothless, peevish and ungrateful, are a condensation of every irritation and prejudice felt about age, and they destroy the Mcintyres' placid, colour magazine lifestyle. By the end of the story, when they return to find their house on fire, we feel a simple relief at

their decision to rescue their books and papers rather than the wrinkled albatrosses upstairs. Certainly neighbours, at worst inconvenienced by the presence of the old couple, will "And what would the Mitchell say?" Good probably, Lois thought.

On its own this painful and Catholicly rigorous tale would confirm Patricia Highsmith's ability to demonstrate the fragility of our largely untested moral structures, and the way in which they are weakened by the seemingly unimportant details of everyday malice. Notions of right and wrong which can't even withstand the breezes of social propriety are unlikely to stand up under greater strain; and yet we sardonically find these little murders all the time.

she is both eloquent and informative (though some might say propagandist). She packs into the story of Ann's turbulent three days not only the great debate on Zionism but also the scenes and smells and sounds of Jerusalem - the frogs to be found among the thistles outside the wall, the stinky frightening road-block to warn of disaster, the constant need for showers and shaded rooms. It does not too much matter that the inevitable, tragic terrorist attack seems a contrivance, and its victims predictably marked, nor that Ann uses her sexual involvement to reach home the cause in which she must believe - although many feminists may raise an eyebrow at such pillow talk.

But even as one listens to the multivocal voices and arguments, with the kind of sympathy it is necessary to extend to any novelist fiercely involved with a political cause, a small doubting voice asks whether novels like this have anything to do with fiction at its best. It is not enough to put names and faces on the interlocutors, or make the points in the debate; the reader must believe in the person as well as the cause. Which is why, despite the always lively and serious response which this novel invites, it is easier to read the history straight and to recall not the main characters in their arguments, but the odd scene or moment in the action when Lynne Reid Banks briefly allows her imagination to take over.

First published in 1936, Ian MacPherson's *Wild Harbour* (258pp. £6.95. 0 86228 022 2) has recently been re-issued by Paul Harris Publishing, Edinburgh, in their Scottish Fiction Reprint Library. Its evocative moved towards the Second World War, the author wondered whether it was possible to "avoid destruction by retreating to a remote spot beyond the range of bombs, poison gas, and bacteria". The answer to his question is this novel which tells the story of two deeply imaginative people who flee to the Highlands of Scotland on the outbreak of a war to end all wars. The novel is as topical today, when the threat of nuclear annihilation is ever-present, as when the book was first published. At the time the TLS said of the novel, "There have been many novels forecasting the desolation of the next war. Most of them try to make a blood-tinged prophecy of a total bombardment. Mr. MacPherson's method is different, much less spectacular but, nevertheless, effective."

When Miss Reid Banks lets go on the rhetoric of Israel and its history,

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she is both eloquent and informative (though some might say propagandist). She packs into the story of Ann's turbulent three days not only the great debate on Zionism but also the scenes and smells and sounds of Jerusalem - the frogs to be found among the thistles outside the wall, the stinky frightening road-block to warn of disaster, the constant need for showers and shaded rooms. It does not too much matter that the inevitable, tragic terrorist attack seems a contrivance, and its victims predictably marked, nor that Ann uses her sexual involvement to reach home the cause in which she must believe - although many feminists may raise an eyebrow at such pillow talk.

But even as one listens to the multivocal voices and arguments, with the kind of sympathy it is necessary to extend to any novelist fiercely involved with a political cause, a small doubting voice asks whether novels like this have anything to do with fiction at its best. It is not enough to put names and faces on the interlocutors, or make the points in the debate; the reader must believe in the person as well as the cause. Which is why, despite the always lively and serious response which this novel invites, it is easier to read the history straight and to recall not the main characters in their arguments, but the odd scene or moment in the action when Lynne Reid Banks briefly allows her imagination to take over.

First published in 1936, Ian MacPherson's *Wild Harbour* (258pp. £6.95. 0 86228 022 2) has recently been re-issued by Paul Harris Publishing, Edinburgh, in their Scottish Fiction Reprint Library. Its evocative moved towards the Second World War, the author wondered whether it was possible to "avoid destruction by retreating to a remote spot beyond the range of bombs, poison gas, and bacteria". The answer to his question is this novel which tells the story of two deeply imaginative people who flee to the Highlands of Scotland on the outbreak of a war to end all wars. The novel is as topical today, when the threat of nuclear annihilation is ever-present, as when the book was first published. At the time the TLS said of the novel, "There have been many novels forecasting the desolation of the next war. Most of them try to make a blood-tinged prophecy of a total bombardment. Mr. MacPherson's method is different, much less spectacular but, nevertheless, effective."

When Miss Reid Banks lets go on the rhetoric of Israel and its history,

How to get your novel published

By Kingsley Amis

No writer can be altogether wholehearted in resenting unsolicited mail. However boring, however outrageous the demands made on him by strangers or (worse, because harder to resist) acquaintances, at least it is him they are bothering: it is his philosophy of life, his favourite response to some merit-free forthcoming volume, his signed photograph, his money that is being requisitioned and not, or not only, Miryaret Drabble's. But this consideration vanishes into thin air when it comes to the postal item most likely to get our man running amuck with an axe or blinding himself: another uninvited unpublished typescript. Before we go any further, do not, reader, send me your novel (especially short), your poems, your essays for my comments and assistance. For one thing, it will do you no good.

Let me explain why. The warmth of my emotion at being saddled with the rubbish might surprise some people but, I think, few writers. They (writers as a class) guard their free time as jealously as their working-time, and if free time is to be invaded by work of any sort there must be no sense of obligation about it. On top of that, the unhappy recipient may think he sees a cheerful implication that he sits about the place week after week waiting for something to turn up, like a one-parent-family saga dropped out of the blue. More plausibly he will sense utter indifference to his own concerns, and inexorable self-promotion. That sort of single-mindedness is a most useful, perhaps even necessary quality in a young

aspirant, but it lacks charm at the receiving end. One notes also the important principle that there must be something a bit funny about a fellow who sends his creations to be read and criticized by a complete stranger. To my knowledge, no writer I respect has ever done it. The practice ceases to be objectionable if the thing arrives attached, and I tolerate those persons who doggedly go on just sending me their publications year after year, though they would do at least as well to send them straight to my second-hand bookseller.

Anyway, in the normal course of events the man with the manuscript is likely to be in about the worst frame of mind possible when, if ever, he glances through what he has been sent. In fact he probably will do this sooner or later, not quite having the heart to send it back unread, unwilling to destroy it but through any scruple but for fear of some gruesome revenge - anyone mad enough to have sent it in the first place will be generally unsafe. And then... Suppose, against all the odds, just suppose there actually seems to be something to be said for it, what happens after that?

At this point I will unveil my latest case, the one that finally supplied the adrenalin to launch this article. Somebody I will call Arbuckle writes from SW7 enclosing three chapters of a novel, the remainder to follow if I ask for them. Now most peevishness of this type kick off in panegyric style, more or less thanking me for having given them a reason to go on

hering the idea presumably being to get me so fuddled with flattery that I will do anything they ask. Nothing so crude for Arbuckle. He merely and boldly states that he and I have the same birthday and went to the same college, then wonders if he might trespass on this coincidence (he'll to ask if I would be kind enough to, etc. The pinch comes at the end of the second paragraph. Perhaps I would advise him how best to go about getting his novel published. Others have put it a little differently but what they all mean is, *fucking get it published*. (And needless to say without the offer of a commission or any anti-life notions of that kind. And usually, as in Arbuckle's case, without return postage either.)

A great many people outside the literary world or on its fringes imagine that the whole thing is run on patronage, on old-boy networks and words dropped in the right quarter. I thought that myself once. Some kind of person who without turning a hair sends his novel to a private individual he has never met, will never read these lines, selectively blinded by the same mysterious power that protects trends and illiterates from seeing articles about "hopefulness" and "disinterested" will therefore address myself to another you, the kind of person who

can face trying to get his novel published under his own steam. I have already told you that there is only one method - writing a publishable novel. But there is an accelerator, a way of speeding the progress of that publishable novel to a publisher who will publish it. Realize that not all publishers publish all kinds of books or even all kinds of novels. They have their specialities and preferences. So avoid things like approaching in the first place the Oxford University Press with your piece of hardish porn. More specifically, go to the public library and look through the contemporary novels until you find one or more that seem to you to be of the same general kind as your novel, note the publisher(s) and proceed from there. (I owe this suggestion to the incomparable Pat Kavanagh.) Type page 1 afresh for each submission, keep your covering letter as brief as possible and trust in God.

I suppose you might find no novels that you think resemble yours. In that case you might be a genius. And in that case you might well run into difficulty getting published. But if you are merely bloody good you will have no trouble. And thereafter your wish will have the world at your feet.

The Loeb Catalogue can be obtained on request from 22 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HH

The Devil's cities in the North

By Patricia Craig

MAURICE LEITCH:
Silver's City
181pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.95.
0 436 24413 6

Maurice Leitch's subjects are viciousness, corruption and varieties of power, and the special outlets Ulster provides for these. He began blithely enough with *The Liberty Lad* (1965), an unimpassioned, first-person account of sexual frustration, industrial decay and jobbery in an Antrim mill village. With *Poor Lazarus*, however, which followed, the mood tightens and toughens. What was kept at the level of intimidation in the first novel, misogyny and brutishness, is fully realized here. (Leitch underlines the point by labelling his central character with a name - Yarr - whose single syllable is midway between a croak and a grunt.)

Stamping Ground (1975) is more vivid and dense than the two earlier books, though its theme is hardly less distressing: purposeless cruelty and malevolence in the countryside. "Summer madness" erupting in deformed lusts, sectarian bailing without the least trace of good humour to alleviate it. Humour itself is transformed into a sour, underhand jeering. Yet in a sense it is the sectarian element, and especially the gaudy trappings of loyalist braggadocio ("It was a time for flags... The valley had flowered with a bright harvest of...") that gives colour to an unenchanting novel. Some of the bigotry expressed by its characters is even tolerably innocent: "Catholics of course were well-known to be a superstitious crowd, always crossing themselves and muttering to a lot of statues." That was in 1950; in Leitch's new novel, set in the more ferocious present, people are more guarded about what they say: "It was rare to hear any mention of religion, however oblique, these days..." The world-wide accusation of bigotry had stung like, oo, oo, oo.

Leitch often uses the degradation of the sexual instinct, brutishness or incapacity, as a metaphor for baneful or arid social conditions. His charac-

ters are generally disabled in this way: Yarr (in *Poor Lazarus*) whose outrage at the antics of a young pick-up (*Bitch, bitch, dirty, dirty wee bitch*) is almost, but not quite, treated comically, might stand for them all. These men, in accordance with some perverse pattern of living, require their women to be skittish, venomous and spiteful, and quickly make them so. In *Silver's City*, another image of grossness comes to the fore: rapacious eating. ("We eat and drink all the wrong things in this country," Silver states in a moment of insight.) The beer cans, the reek of fried potatoes, the fat young thugs perpetually guzzling: these contribute to the capricious, depraved conditions the novel explores.

Leitch eschews every device that might make the bleakness, the violence and the bad ends more palatable; no obvious decorative ploys, no satire, allegory, or literary allusions, get into his books. He allows himself a single indulgence in *Silver's City*: some playful references to the dance-hall days of his leading middle-aged racketeers. Billy Bonner, the small-time gunman and politician, is classified ironically as a "former champion fox-trotter". The author is entertained, too, as much as anything, by the spectacle of the graceless and grimness in pursuit of nonchalance. ("The picnic's over," he said. "I'm in charge. Okay?")

Otherwise the novel is all dinginess and savagery; not realism, so much as a kind of heightened rendering of fear, pain and confusion, is its objective. The clearest clues to Leitch's purpose are to be found in his epigraphs - from St Augustine, in *Silver's City*: "The Devil hath established / His cities in the North"; and from the Colville Papers (1717) in *Stamping Ground*: "... for as we know savage customs begat a corresponding darkness of the soul." His new novel, as far as style is concerned, may be criticized for partaking a little too readily of the coarseness and aridity it depicts; but it's still a striking addition to a body of work which is engaged in exposing and dramatizing the characteristic defects of the Northern Irish.

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£6.95 MICHAEL JOSEPH

Play up, play up

By John Rae

J. A. MANGAN: *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology*. 345pp. Cambridge University Press. £25. 0 19 812713 8

The first known cricket match between public schools took place in July 1796, between Eton and Westminster. The day after the match the Etonians were flogged by their Head Master, not for having lost (which they had) but for having dared to take part. Nearly two hundred years later, in 1981, Eton's cricket authorities, embarrassed by lack of interest and small attendances at Lord's, finally persuaded Harrow that their annual fixture should be a more modest one-day affair. The two incidents, of no interest to the rest of society, marked the outer limits of the period which witnessed the rise and fall of a phenomenon that society could not afford to ignore because its influence was so widespread in public-school athletics.

Athleticism was a complex phenomenon at the heart of which was a belief that compulsory, competitive team games identified and developed qualities of character that were admirable in themselves and essential for "life's long earnest strife". Such a belief would have seemed preposterous in 1796: by 1981 it had become a curious mechanism, a suitable subject for sociological research. Yet for some sixty years, from 1853 to 1914 this belief dominated not only the public-school system but also those areas of British and Imperial society where public-school men played the leading roles. The First World War struck it a mortal blow but it was a long time dying. It was certainly twitching energetically when I joined the Harrow staff in 1955. Perhaps it was the mess media that finally finished it off: whether at Twickenham, Wimbledon or White Hart Lane, the television cameras cruelly exposed the fallacy that there was some connection between athletic excellence and noble qualities of character.

J. A. Mangan's admirable study concentrates on the reasons for the spread of athleticism in the public schools and on the mixture of idealism and immaturity that sustained it for so long. He avoids the obvious pitfalls: to write about the public schools at all in this period, let alone their obsession with team games, without a single flip comment or knowing aside is quite an achievement. Dr Mangan sees the virtues as well as the more widely publicized limitations of athleticism. He is objective without being dull. It is unlikely that this piece of English social history will receive a more perceptive and balanced treatment.

Before 1850, public schoolboys played games they wanted to. Headmasters were either uninterested or disapproving; assistant masters felt little responsibility for boys outside the classroom. Left to themselves, some boys chose to play cricket and football but others preferred to roam wild over the countryside, killing birds and animals and alienating the local farmers. When Cotton went to Marlborough in 1852 he found the school in a state of near-anarchy, in which bullying, coaching and "general lawlessness" flourished. His solution was organized games.

In a circular to parents, Cotton unwittingly launched public-school athletics. His motives were practical. Organized games meant less vandalism and disorder; masters being involved in games meant better relations between boys and staff, which in turn improved discipline. The blind worship of games was far from Cotton's thoughts and he would have been dismayed to see how his initiative had been transformed into the athleticism of the end of the century.

If Cotton gave a decisive push to the growth of organized games, the spirit of athleticism has its origins in Harrow's Philathletic Club, founded in the same year - 1853 - as Cotton's circular to parents. The "Phil" was founded to promote an interest in games and mainly exercises, its prospectus asserting with characteristic optimism that "those who play well will be generally found to work well". Its members were senior boys who excelled at games and formed a *corps d'élite*, which enjoyed enormous influence, prestige and power. In the 1850s, membership of the Phil was still regarded by the boys as a greater honour than being appointed a school monitor.

As Mangan points out, it was the somewhat unlikely figure of Dr Vaughan of Harrow rather than Cotton of Marlborough or Thring of Uppingham who should be regarded as the father of athleticism. Not that Vaughan was interested in games. He took care of a brutal and unruly school, where many boys kept a dog and cats, and the former to kill the latter, and fought pitched battles with the navvies building the London and North Western Railway. Like Cotton he saw organized games as the answer but unlike Cotton he was clever enough to let the initiative come from the boys.

Once organized games began to gather momentum at schools of the calibre of Harrow and Marlborough, less prestigious establishments, anxious to have all the trappings of a proper public school, quickly followed the fashion. There were powerful and original headmasters such as Thring and Almond of Loretto who gave the new passion for games an individual stamp, and there were schools where the prevailing ethos - such as the Jesuit ethic at Stonyhurst - meant that full-blooded athleticism never quite caught on; but the majority of public schools swallowed the new ideology without questioning its value.

The machinery of athleticism was fully established in most schools by 1900. There was opposition, not least from the boys themselves, but gradually, unevenly, the forces of athleticism triumphed. The boys were compelled, the staff were involved, the pitches were bought and the facilities extended, house matches and "foreign" matches were arranged and careful records were kept. In institutions resistant to change, innovation becomes tradition overnight. The boys soon regarded compulsory games as an essential part of all that was best in their schools. Games were also a welcome release from the narrow and badly taught curriculum. Athletics certainly encouraged the anti-intellectualism that characterized so many public schools but it is usually forgotten that athletics itself flourished because the intellectual diet placed before the boys was so boring and tasteless. It is not surprising that schools began to claim that games were a better training for life than the study of Latin and Greek; given the way those subjects were taught, it was probably true. But Anglo-Saxon suspicion of cleverness had deeper roots: athleticism only reflected and exploited it.

Two important factors in the growth of athleticism were the sporting master and the house system. The "dry pedants" of the early nineteenth century were replaced by young men who could play games with the boys as well as coach. Even the most unathletic headmaster recognized the importance of having bluffs on his staff. If a man had represented Oxford or Cambridge (or better still England) at cricket or rugby he could play games with the boys as well as coach. Even the most unathletic headmaster recognized the importance of having bluffs on his staff. If a man had represented Oxford or Cambridge (or better still England) at cricket or rugby he could play games with the boys as well as coach.

The French boys - unmanly fellows - were thinking about girls. It was one of the explicit aims of athletics to prolong boyhood and thus avoid the distractions of the opposite sex. Games instilled of girls would, it was hoped, postpone the "mental storms" of awakening sexuality from adolescence to the early twenties. This attempt to postpone forcibly the natural development of sexual awareness had an impact not only on the boys themselves but also on the adult society they created. Mangan does not ask what this impact was nor the nature of any serious study of the subject. The conventional answer is expressed in terms of

These "perpetual schoolboys" were ingenious idealists whose en-



Everyday life in an English public school, as imagined by Frank Richards, creator of Greyfriars, and his illustrator. It accompanies his article, "On Being a Boy's Writer", which is now reprinted in *The Best of the Saturday Book* (320pp. Hutchinson. £12.95. 0 09 145940 7). First published in 1941 under the editorship of Leonard Russell, the *Saturday Book* in thirty-four annual issues, until it ceased publication in 1973, offered an urbane mixture of good writing, fine illustration, and gently civilized observation of the curious in art and life; the resurgence of interest in Victorianism owed much to Russell. Not unfairly described as the originator of the "coffee-table" book, the *Saturday Book* was described by Bevis Hillier, reviewing the final issue for *The Times*, as "a sampling-flask of the nation's subconscious". The present selection is edited by John Hadfield, for twenty-three years editor of the *Saturday Book*.

thousiasm provided the dynamic in athletics. In *The Loom of Youth*, Alec Waugh drew an unforgettable portrait of the games master, based on the great Sherborne rugby coach, G. M. Carey.

It was the first game after the summer holidays and everyone felt rather flabby. At half-time the great man burst out: "I have played football for twenty-five years. I coached Oxford teams and Gloucestershire teams, led an England team, and for fifteen years I have taught football here, but never saw I such a display! Shirkling, the whole lot of you! Get your shoulders down and shove. Never saw anything like it. Awful!"

Carey was also a housemaster and it was the house system that provided the essential framework for athletics. House matches were fought and remembered with greater intensity than school matches. Philathletic housemasters, such as Edward Bowen at Harrow, were the high priests of the cult. Within their houses an elaborate hierarchy of colours and privileges assured the successful athlete a place in the sun. Bowen's Harrow songs were the most pure expression of the ideals of athletics just as his cream tans for the winning cock-house team were a personal endorsement of the more down-to-earth business of defeating the opposition.

Housemasters' reports reflected the priorities. "I don't think too much attention need be given to the very bad report he has received from Mr Roebuck his classics master", wrote a Harrow housemaster. "He has played exceptionally hard and for the second year running we won the cock-house match."

Far from disapproving of these priorities, parents gave unqualified support to the school's worship of games and the games player. And foreigners were persuaded that a passion for games was the secret of Britain's success. "A *quod tunc* des Anglo-Saxonis?" asked a French writer in 1897 and concluded that enthusiasm for games was an important part of the answer. The "public-school" headmasters agreed. "You think games occupy a disproportionate share of the boy's mind", wrote J. M. Wilson of Clifton. "You may be thankful this is so; What do French boys think about?"

The French boys - unmanly fellows - were thinking about girls. It was one of the explicit aims of athletics to prolong boyhood and thus avoid the distractions of the opposite sex. Games instilled of girls would, it was hoped, postpone the "mental storms" of awakening sexuality from adolescence to the early twenties. This attempt to postpone forcibly the natural development of sexual awareness had an impact not only on the boys themselves but also on the adult society they created. Mangan does not ask what this impact was nor the nature of any serious study of the subject. The conventional answer is expressed in terms of

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homosexuality but, in so far as we can ever know, it was the anti-games boys, the aesthetes rather than the hearties who were more likely to become practising homosexuals. Perhaps Robert Graves was right when he wrote of "pseudo-homosexuals": men whose public school athleticism had made either hostile to or frightened of women.

By 1900 the original rationale for organized games had been long forgotten and athletics had developed its own ideological justification. Games not only postponed the mental torment of sex. They taught a morality. They developed manliness and toughness without which an expanding empire could not be run. They encouraged patriotism as the fierce loyalty to house and school was transferred to the regiment and the country. They even - one headmaster asserted - improved the export trade because while the Germans and Japanese might have the

Home and county

By Timothy d'Arch Smith

AYLWIN SAMPSON: *The Homes of First-Class Cricket*. 206pp. Hale. £8.95. 0 7091 9140 5

This book gives a detailed description of every ground where first-class cricket is played in England today. As the author points out when he comes to list his sources there is a paucity of information on this aspect of the game and his architecturally trained eye and pencil have admirably filled the gap.

The first-class counties, with the exception of Glamorgan, cut through the centre of England or hug her south-east corner from the Stour to the Avon, each ground reflecting something of the nature of the county in which it is situated. Thus the grandstand at Derby has something of the racecourse about it and the old enclosure at Leicester is called the Meet. Surrey's Oval reflects an essentially artisan area of London, old factory evidence from the gasworks or brewery having been enough for Alf Gover, a bowler who preferred to bowl downwind, to decide whether on any particular morning the Pavilion or Vauxhall end would suit him better.

The focal point of most cricket grounds is the pavilion. The most magnificent of these are at Lord's, of course, Old Trafford and the Oval (the last two by the same architect), and much of the book is devoted to these buildings. There is a lot that domestic boys would find of interest. The pavilion at Bourne, for instance, or the handsome balcony

edge in effort, ingenuity and advertising. The English businessman, known for his spirit of fair play, guaranteed trustworthy manufacture, even if the goods were obsolete.

It is easy to mock or rage in the face of such naive assertions; and even a calmer assessment of recent British history cannot help noticing that the nation's long decline coincides exactly with the period when the public schools and public-school athletics were most influential. But it is one of the advantages of Mangan's book that he sees athletics in the round. He points out that there was "visionary idealism as well as myopic naivety". Decency, loyalty and a sense of fair play were not ignoble ideals even if they were sometimes perverted. Our own society is not so rich in noble ideals that it can afford to forget or sneer at the ideals that motivated the philathletes of the Victorian and Edwardian public schools.

clock-tower at Worcester. (Talking of Worcester, Aylwin Sampson sensibly notes how quickly end ground reverts from ruin, a most useful piece of information for anyone setting out for a match after inclement weather. Worcester is clearly to be avoided since it appears that a forty-five pound salmon was once caught there after a storm, while the heavy roller was discovered upside down two fields away.)

With this book there can be no excuse for becoming bored during a defensive period of play, for there is much to explore on each ground. It may be difficult to get to see the dressing-rooms at Old Trafford, furnished with plush seats from an old Manchester cinema, but we can look at the extraordinary telephone-kiosk at Dean Park, or the Portsmouth motorized roller (by Emmett out of Heath Robinson), or the old three-story Bath which could have been built by Wyatt for Beckford. Even the Hampshire lavatories are worth a visit. Sampson might have added that those in the Lord's pavilion have their exits and their entrances marked "Out" and "Not Out". He may not know much about the Ladies of Lord's, but my mother, a fanatical Middlesex supporter who is more than three of their weight, would be down before lunch, with the men to report of this establishment.

Situated under the Mound stand, arctic cold even on the warmest day, it used to be run by a formidable lady who once, after some tiff, filled Denis Compton's cricket boots with walnut shells. Absent from her post one day during an Eton and Harrow match, probably to restore circulation, she returned to find an elegantly dressed woman in a picture hat adroitly scooping up the contents of her tips, saucer.

JAMES THOMSON:

The Seasons. Edited by James Sambrook. 397pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford. £12.95. 0 19 812713 8

A chapter which Rose Macaulay projected, but never wrote, for her *Pleasure of Rhinoceros* was to have been called "Meudlering Mansions". One of the functions of the Oxford English Dictionary is to refurbish the decayed seats of our past literature, like some benevolent National Trust, and make them fit to be seen by the modern reader. Few among the once standard authors can be in more need of a lick of editorial paint than James Thomson, and he has been fortunate to find so deft a conservator as James Sambrook. As a passage in "Autumn" reminds us, Thomson spent some time at Eastbury, Bubb Dodington's splendid retreat on "the pure Dorsetian Downs". And the fate of this baroque palace makes a suitable emblem for Thomson's own destiny.

Eastbury was one of Vanbrugh's heavier loads on the earth, set down in Cranborne Chase. In the pages of *Vitruvius Britannicus* it looks all horizontal emphasis and knobby balustrades; it cost its owner £140,000 (far more than Castle Howard), and was to be the focus of a great literary circle formed round Thomson, Fielding, Young and Lyttelton. But the little senate collapsed, Dodington died fat and gouty, and Eastbury passed to the Grenvilles of Stowe. They pulled down all except one wing in the 1790s, having failed in their offer of £200 a year to anyone who could be persuaded to live in it. The family settled for the more modest comforts of Stowe instead of Timon's villa, full of draughts and tasteless bric-a-brac. The wing which survived still stands, famous for a freakish hush growing on top of an arch, but not much visited. Similarly, the renown of *The Seasons* has not totally disappeared, as has that of Young's *Night Thoughts*; but it is a mere shell compared to the vastly popular work for a century and a half. Such a mouldering reputation seems almost more melancholy than outright extinction.

Nothing now will bring back the former glory of *The Seasons*. Not even Dr Sambrook's diligent restoration work will make it frequentable, as it once was. For one thing, the price of the volume is such that no individual could afford it. But that is not the whole story, because the same editor brought out a nicely compact version of the poem, together with *The Castle of Indolence*, for the Oxford Paperback Texts series in 1972 - and one has not observed a great throng proclaiming Thomson's merits. Even specialists are divided over his poetry: some find it windy and turgid. Hard to believe that Voltaire once wrote to George Lyttelton that he discovered in Thomson "a great genius and a great Simplicity".

I lik'd in him the poet and the true philosopher, I mean the Lover of Mankind. I think that without such a good stock of such a philosophy a poet is just above a filler, who amuses our ears and can not go to our Soul.

Voltaire, almost uniquely, had a good word to say about Thomson's Whiggish tragedies, but he also thought *The Seasons* deserved its success with "the judicious readers and the men of taste."

So it was believed by many good judges for generations. At Grasmere in 1802, Wordsworth wrote stanzas "in my pocket-copy of Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*" - the imitation was as unsurprising as the fact that the poem should have become a portable classic. Half the unidentified quotations in Hazlitt turn out to be Thomson; as Lawrence Gowing has recently shown (TLS, July 10), *The Seasons* was a source of inspiration for Turner as well as Gains-

borough. Even more startling is the poet's continental reputation. From Sweden to Russia - everywhere except the Iberian peninsula. T. J. Matthias produced a version in ottava rima, *Il Castello dell'Ozio* (Naples, 1826). As for *The Seasons*, that was turned into more than 4,000 lines of four- and eight-stress verse, with irregular rhymes, by the "worthy city father" of Hamburg (the description is Goethe's). Barthold Heinrich Brockes. His *Jahreszeiten des Herrn Thomson* (1745) paved the way for the eratorio by Haydn. Despite the alterations and additions, van Swieten is not so far in spirit from Thomson as musicologists tend to imply, and there is an authentic line joining Thomson's bucolics and the mock-rusticities in Haydn's score. There are of course earlier musical analogues to *The Seasons* by composers such as Boismortier; and Thomson had his literary rivals - Metastasio was even then producing his *canzonette* entitled *La primavera e l'estate*. Today the most prominent works in this vein are the four concertos which Vivaldi included in *Il cimento dell'armonia e dell'invenzione* (1725). With their introductory sonnets setting out the traditional seasonal topics, these compositions do fairly recall *The Seasons* of Thomson, as garnished with William Kent's allegorical designs for the 1730 edition. But for a long time to come Vivaldi was considered much the lesser artist, a judgment happily concurred in by those of us who would decant this shrilly insistent composer right out of the eighteenth century if we could.

For Thomson, the decline set in around 1800. It is not much of a paradox to remark that his popular currency died away just as critical and scholarly work was beginning. There were the first proper editions, by J. L. Robertson (1831) and Otto Zippel (1888); the former is obsolete, but the latter contains material which has remained useful, and Sambrook's notes can occasionally be traced to this source. Around the same date came a good little book in the English Men of Letters series: its author was himself a characteristic "man of letters", G. C. Macaulay, father of Dame Rose. After that, Thomson faded away into a dissertation subject, and was only revived by the superb detective work of Alan D. McKillop, starting with *The Background of Thomson's Seasons* (1942). Since then, we have had valuable contributions by several critics, including John Barrell, John Chalker, Ralph Cohen, Marjorie Hope Nicolson and Patricia M. Spacks. But the *Background* was uniquely fertile: it is a kind of literary *Road to Xanadu*, which can yet make intelligible the fervent emotion which infuses Thomson's varied themes and transfigures his far-fung sources.

His imagination was of a curious order. One might say that his mind was busy and impressionable, rather than truly creative. But he contrived to forge a mode which could handle the Augustan crises of conscience more effectively than any other style available. More consistently than Pope in the *Essay on Man*, he was able to pressurize the existing idiom so that it might cope with the new experience. Far from countering Milton as the great inhibitor, he found in Miltonic diction a liberating influence which released his inhibitions with language. Not weighed down by Latinisms (at his best, that is), he could loop them into the existing semantic circuits of English in a way that is no longer possible (the pale wretch in "Spring", for instance, "exanimate by Love").

Perhaps it has something to do with his Scottish background and education; his disciple James Beattie was to remark that the Scots learnt English as a dead language, which they could understand but not speak - hence a willingness to assimilate formalities of speech that a native user would not dare to employ.

Coleridge was to write to Wordsworth that "whatever in Lucræti poetry is not philosophical, whatever is philosophical is not poetry". Thomson certainly took a great amount from *De Rerum Natura*, duly signalled in Sambrook's commentary. He went particularly to the second half of the poem, what might be regarded as the applications of the scientific theory: there is a lot in *The Seasons* from Lucretius' analysis in Book V of the early stages of civilization, and a surprising reliance on Book VI, which has seldom been amongst the most admired portions. Thomson was stirred by the raw power of nature, but also - very much in the manner of Lucretius - by the patterns he could discern in the violence. There is certainly some truth in L. P. Wilkinson's remark that in his storm scenes he was striving "to overprint Virgil", but they possess a linguistic vitality to match the descriptive energy. And this seems to proceed from the Newtonian input, the intellectually galvanizing force which meant you could replace the abstract beings of mythology with specifics, the quantifiable and the regulable. The great Promethean figure had opened up not just cosmology or optics, but geology, hydrology, chemistry, primitive ornithology, even the as yet scarcely existent biological sciences. The trick is to get the effect of personification whilst alluding to the classifiability of:

Behold, slow-setting o'er the lurid Grove
Unusual Darkness broods; and growing gains
The dull possession of the Sky,
With wrathful Vapour, from the secret Beds,
Where sleep the mineral Generations, drawn,
Thence Niter, Sulphur, and the fiery Spume
Of fat Bitumen, steaming on the Day,
With various-incted Trains of silent Flame
Pollute the Sky, and in yon baleful Cloud,
A reckoning Glue, Magazine of Fate,
Ferment; till, by the Touch ethereal
The Dash of Clouds, or trailing War of
Of lightning Winds, while all is calm below,
They furious spring.

This vein of elemental melodrama (Lucan is another possible influence) is accompanied by a taste for refulgent language and near-grotesque collocations. At moments Thomson will even recall Góngora, a poet he is admittedly unlikely to have known at all well, each of them seeking to revivify standard semantic currency in a heightened emotional rate, neither had learnt that *de orbe exurge templanza*. The poetic of *The Seasons* is one of forcing words into places where they do not quite wish to go: one is reminded of Sumner's description of the baroque as "torquing the old classical vocabulary". The grandiloquence is felt to be necessary because the universe is more wonderfully varied than previous descriptions had acknowledged; the new world-view stretches the domain of objective facts, and poetry stretches too.

It is a corollary of Thomson's exclamationary style that the outward presentation of his verse matters. The post-Renaissance poet whose punctuation seems to have been most closely studied, as far as England is concerned, is Milton, another who deals in awe-inspiring rhetoric. Consequently, it is interesting to learn from Sambrook's introduction that Thomson, too, might reward detailed attention in this regard. It emerges that he paid especially close heed to accidentals in revising printed copy (this was known in broad terms, but the precise facts have not been set out in full before now). The editor refers to David Foxon's work on Pope to show that the habits of presentation could be so important a part of the total meaning for an eighteenth-century writer. If anything, this matters more in the case of Thomson, for his gestures are more flamboyant, and his semaphoric punctuation is to that degree more expressive.

The typography of emphatic words is a subject still not very well understood, and Sambrook's meticulous

Emphasizing the elements

By Pat Rogers

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The typography of emphatic words is a subject still not very well understood, and Sambrook's meticulous

calculations with regard to these conventions repay careful study. As a brief indication of the flattening effect imposed by modern "normalizing", we might compare two versions of "Summer", both based on the 1746 text. The first is taken from J. L. Robertson's well-known Oxford Standard Authors volume:

Ah! what avail their fatal treasures, hid
Deep in the bowels of the plying earth.
Glebe's gems, and sad Potos's mines
Where dwell the gentlest children of
What all that Afric's golden rivers roll,
Her odorous woods, and shining ivory stores?
Ill-fated race! the softening arts of
Whate'er the humanizing muses teach,
The godlike wisdom of the temper'd breast,
Progressive truth, the patient force of thought,
Investigation calm whose silent powers
Command the world, the light that leads to Heaven,
Kind equal rule, the government of laws,
And all-protecting freedom which alone
Sustains the name and dignity of man -
These are not theirs.

And now Sambrook's reproduction of a diplomatic text:

Ah! what avail their fatal Treasures,
Deep in the Bowels of the plying Earth.
Goleonda's Gems, and sad Potos's Mines;
Where dwell the gentlest Children of the Sun?
What all that Afric's golden Rivers roll,
Her odorous Woods, and shining Ivory Stores?
Ill-fated Race! the softening Arts el
Whate'er the humanizing Muses teach,
The godlike Wisdom of the temper'd Breast;
Progressive Truth, the patient Force of Thought;

Notoriously, Thomson was a tinkerer, and few poems were so heavily and regularly revised as *The Seasons*. Nearly always revising meant expansion, at least until Lyttelton produced the posthumous editions, when certain bits were excised. For example, he left out the Benedicite which Thomson had placed at the end, under the title "A Hymn". Despite the professed reasons Lyttelton gave, the editor is doubtless right to surmise that the true explanation was that Thomson's language of celebration had become redolent of natural religion, not far indeed from the common currency of militant

investigation calm, whose silent Powers Command the World; the Light that leads to Heaven; Kind equal Rule, the Government of Laws And all-protecting FREEDOM, which alone Sustains the Name and Dignity of Man: These are not theirs.

The first version preserves Thomson's free use of question and exclamation marks, which in English always tend to stand out (as against the mandatory appearance of certain punctuation marks in German, say). But it loses a great deal. The options made available by italics and small capitals are displayed in the second version, where a kind of crescendo and diminuendo among the abstractions is made possible as the last sentence trails its way from piety to piety. The capitalization of "Ivory" suits the diction, and reduces the sense of a mere unthinking epithet. "Children of the Sun" is a more evocative expression, resembling *Sonnenkinder*, than "children of the Sun", which tecters over the emphatic *S* into vainly prosopopeia. The words in Robertson's text are too big for the heavenly boots of modern typography; it is not so with the 1746 presentation.

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deism. Then again, Lyttelton removed the hitherto hitherto from "Autumn" in Sambrook's witty says, this section was "not lost but had gone before," since it was separately printed in the *Works* of 1750.

The introduction is very helpful in charting the various stages of revision. Now that we have the bibliographical history stated more fully and scrupulously, it is clear that the intervening editions dating from the 1730s have no kind of authority. It is the original separate printings from 1726 of the first three poems, their reappearance with "Autumn" in 1730, and their collective revision in 1744 and 1746, which constitute the main landmarks. Sambrook quotes a bill sent by the printer Woodfall to the publisher Millar "for divers and repeated alterations," and indeed Thomson must have been almost as difficult an author to keep within bounds as Balzac himself.

Again, Sambrook rightly points out that the additional material constantly flowing into the poem "intensified" Thomson's problems of organization, and one could not claim that the work at any stage of its creation was a masterpiece of ordonnance. The poet's notion of what he once called "the true matter in poetry" was steadily expanding, and since he was in the straightforward sense a very derivative writer, his poem grew as his reading strayed into new areas. But already in 1727, for example, "Summer" testified to the author's wide familiarity with the literature of travel and exploration. (The snail catalogue of his library, which has only surfaced in recent times, shows his holdings in this area, as does that of his friend Mallect.) Such reading lies behind his perceptive lines on Vasco da Gama: the source (Bernhard Varenius) is

not transmitted exactly, but the events are reconstructed in Thomson's cheerful mercantile terms.

In his introduction, Sambrook covers most of the major themes of the poem, perhaps slightly underestimating the humanistic aspect. His full commentary builds on the information supplied in his 1972 Oxford Paperbacks text. One everywhere traces McKillop's pioneering research, but of course it would only be sinister if one could not do so. A curious omission concerns line 516f in "Summer": the useful note supplied in 1972 has been heavily printed, so that we now have no information on an important aspect of the work, that is Thomson's hard side and his relation to "the famous Drunken." It would appear that this is simply an oversight. Elsewhere the editor has augmented his previous annotation to considerable profit. It is not easy to find significant grounds for criticism, and a reviewer must be satisfied by listing the most nakedly factual issues.

Sambrook alludes to John Conduitt, Newton's successor at the Mint, as his nephew: actually he was the husband of Sir Isaac's niece. The paragraph in question describes the subscription list for the 1731 volume: one might put in a plea that standard editions of this kind should now regularly include relevant subscription lists, which would only take up three or four pages and would much enhance our understanding of it given book's reception. At "Autumn," line 770n, Sambrook has no comment on the phrase regarding Princess Amelia, "reserved to bliss." Beyond it, of course, is a happy prince. This must surely have been a reference to the long-projected marriage between the princess and the Prussian heir, later Frederick the

Great: its disappearance in later editions is to be explained by the shelving of this plan, followed by Frederick's marriage in 1733 to the Princess of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel (which proved no better a match, dynastically or humanly). In "A Hymn," line 16f, "with Clumsy and Stupid / Around Time thrown, Tempest o'er Tempest roll'd, / Majestic Darkness on the Whirlwind's Wing, / Riding sublime," would certainly have reminded contemporaries of Addison's classic passage on Marlborough, "Calm and Serene he drives the furious Blast; / And pleas'd th' Almighty's Orders to perform, / Rides in the Whirlwind, and directs the Storm."

The photographer to the illustrated edition of *Pleasure of Ruins*, Rudolf Beny, observes, "Great cities decline, they gradually submit to history, caught in the organic grip of nature and left haunted, or cruelly stripped of embellishments by man's urge to plunder." *The Seasons* was plundered, in one way or another, by many artists - Cowper, Wordsworth, Turner, Haydn; even Beethoven could have found a programme for the Pastoral in "Summer," though he may not have known it. But the poem has, unquestionably, submitted to history in the past hundred years. A proud object of admiration has become an archaeological site. There is no irony in that: Thomson died just too soon to learn about the ruins of Palmyra or Spalato, fit subjects for his pen. He also just missed the Lisbon earthquake, which would have sorely tried his cosmic whiggery. Still, if the poem lacks serviceability in the present, it can have the dignity of a well-preserved antiquity. May James Sambrook's notable edition save it from crumbling away altogether.



Paula Modersohn-Becker. Her Life and Work by Gillian Perry, reviewed in the *TLS* March 21, 1980 and now published in a paperback edition (160pp. Women's Press, £4.95, 0 7043 3843 2) is illustrated by over eighty diotone and twenty-six colour reproductions of the work of the artist Paula Becker, born in 1876, who married Otto Modersohn and deeply affected the post-Rike. She produced many starkly compassionate portraits of the country labourers around the Worpswede artists' colony where they lived, such as "Peasant Woman with Red and Blue Headscarf," painted in oil in 1905, reproduced here.

Cavalier treatment

By Blair Worden

Love in It's Exstasy, or, *The large Precogative*. A Kind of Royal Pastoral written long since, by a Gentleman, Student at Aetor and now Published. Edited by Sir Robert Birley. Unnumbered pages, 11kley: The Roxburghe Club.

The English Civil War, we all know, closed the playhouses. No one would now argue that Puritanism was innately and invariably hostile to the theatre. Nevertheless, there does seem to have been a connection in the late 1640s between a mounting reaction against the rule of the victorious Puritans and a renewed appetite for the plays which parliament legislation and military occupation had banished. Performance remained difficult and dangerous (although the hazards may have enhanced the attractions), but if plays were rarely staged they were widely read. In the postwar wasteland, the drama offered escape and romance, tastes which were evident in a selective rediscovery of early seventeenth-century classics. The drama also offered, at a lower literary level, an

opportunity for scurrilous anti-Cromwellian and anti-republican satire.

In September 1649, a few days before a severe licensing act stopped the assaults with which royalists contrived to irritate the infant Commonwealth, there was published *Love in It's Exstasy*, or, *The large Precogative*, a Kind of Royal Pastoral written long since, by a Gentleman, Student at Aetor. The publication had a political purpose, as we shall see; but both as a political and as a literary enterprise it was more subtle than such better-known royalist squibs of 1649 as *The Famous Tragedy of King Charles I* and *A Tragical-Comedy of New-Market-Faire*. The play's author was very probably William Peaps, a pupil at Eton in the mid-1630s, when Henry Wotton was Provost and John Hales a Fellow. If we are to believe the unsigned preface to the 1649 publication, Peaps was "not full seventeen" when he composed the piece. There is no means of telling whether he, or anyone else, revised it before the 1649 publishers acquired it, although the play, flawed and limited as it undoubtedly is, contains scenes which display a greater measure of stylistic and emotional assurance than one would readily expect in an adolescent author. In its form and in its theme, however, this long and complicated Platonic fable, with its storms and shipwrecks, its princesses disguised as shepherdesses, its cardsharp tyrant brought to repentance by his wifely, lovesick, cardboard antagonists, looks very much like a pre-Civil War creation.

The play reads easily, has some pretty lines, and may have been readily ignored by students of Caroline literature. Even so, as the 1649 preface conceals, "Did the stage enjoy its former lustre, this [play] would have been still neglected; but since those pastimes are denied us wherein we saw the soul and genius of all the world live contracted in the little compass of an English Theatre, I have thought fit amidst a number of more serious pieces to venture this in publick." Now it is ventured in public again, in a facsimile reproduction published by the Roxburghe Club, printed by the Scolar Press, and edited by the former Headmaster of Eton Sir Robert Birley, who provides a useful introduction - although even readers who think our age overfond of footnotes might have been glad of a modicum

of documentary explanation. Sir Robert's most interesting contribution is to trace an obscure reference in the play to a copy of the works of Tycho Brahe which belonged to John Harrison, Peaps's headmaster, to whose library Sir Robert devoted an article in *Notes and Records of the Royal Society* in 1958. Set beside other allusions in the play, the reference supports the suggestion implicit in that article that the new science may have been a subject of eager study at Eton in the mid-1630s, when Robert Boyle grew up there under Harrison's close tutelage.

Outside the walls of Eton, Sir Robert is a less informative guide. He recognizes that the interest of *Love in It's Exstasy* lies at least as much in the circumstances of its publication as in its content, but thinks that "it may perhaps be left to the reader to decide whether it is a royalist play." Perhaps; but perhaps too the reader would have welcomed a little more guidance. Let us look at some clues.

It would of course be surprising to find that a fairytale conceived before the Civil War exactly met the needs of royalist political argument in 1649. *Love in It's Exstasy* does not do so; and its publishers did not intend it to. There are no parallels between the plot of the play and the events of the Puritan Revolution. There are allusions in the text to tyranny, to taxation, to parliament and to monarchy, but royalists would have had no reason to relish them. Most of them are fleeting; for although its plot concerns kings and kingship, *Love in It's Exstasy* is scarcely more political than such plays about rulers and courts as *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*.

Or, rather, that is true of most of it. In two obtrusive passages, one in the opening scene, the other in Act II scene 2, the characters explicitly discuss problems of political obedience and resistance in terms which recall the debates of the late 1640s and which by implication condemn the regicides and the new republic. Sir Robert appears to regard the contemporary relevance of these passages as a happy accident of which the publishers took advantage; but their presence in the text seems likely to owe more to royalist sympathies in 1649 than to an Eton schoolboy of the mid-1630s. (So does the wording of the play's sub-titles.) It is

true that, as Birley observes, the obedience issue was frequently treated by the Jacobean and Caroline dramatists on whom Peaps modelled himself. The obtrusive passages of *Love in It's Exstasy*, however, are also concerned with the separable, and before the 1640s separate, question of popular sovereignty, which has no bearing on Peaps's plot. Throughout the rest of the play the characters assume, as all English politicians of the 1630s would have assumed, that if a king were deposed another would replace him. In 1649 Charles I was replaced not by a king but by a republic. It is that event that gives meaning to the play's obtrusive passages.

Admittedly we cannot prove that the 1649 editor, whoever he was, inserted them. Our suspicions will be heightened, however, if we look at other publications in the late 1640s (that is, at what we have seen the 1649 preface call "a number of more serious pieces") produced by the play's publisher, Mercy Meighen, Gabriel Bedell and Thomas Collins. Probably at almost exactly the time that *Love in It's Exstasy* appeared, the same team published a sermon by the royalist divine and future bishop Edward Rainbow which advertised the meeting of a clandestine Anglican congregation in London. Earlier in 1649 Meighen and Bedell had published John Evelyn's translation, with its provocatively royalist preface, of the work by François de la Mothe which appeared as *Of Liberty and Servitude*. Wilson, Meighen, Bedell and Collins lead us to a group of royalist publishers which can be conveniently approached through the index to Wing's *Short Title Catalogue*, and which involved the Earl of Monmouth and the printers Richard Royston and Humphrey Mosely.

One aim of the group, as of other royalist propagandists of the later 1640s, was to give a literary dimension to the Cavalier cause. The ambition was reflected in the group's publication of the Tacitean writings of Virgilio Malvezzi and Triano Boccalini. Perhaps the same purpose helps us to understand why royalists thought it worth their while to publish Peaps's play, which they cannot have expected to reap great financial rewards; and which, although brief passages of it might be tailored to the event of regicide, was otherwise

so innocently distant from the political harshness of post-Civil-War England. In the resentment provoked by the power and centralization of parliamentary rule, by committees and excise-men, Cavaliers found an opportunity to portray the lost world of the 1630s as a period happily free of politics. The preface to *Love in It's Exstasy* ingeniously contrives both to provide royalist signposts (comparable to those given by the play's obtrusive passages) and yet to hark back to an era when the term "royalist" would have been otiose: "You may be confident there lies no Treason in it nor State-investitive (the common issues of this present age). It is inoffensive all, soft as the milkie daves it was written in." The image of "soft milkie daves" to describe Charles I's personal rule may be compared with the term "haleyon daves" used to portray it by John Evelyn in his royalist preface of 1649 and by George Bate in the first major royalist history of the Civil War, published in the same year. Clarendon's *History* harped on the same theme, as much Cavalier nostalgia had done. War-weary nostalgia was an obvious sentiment for royalists to exploit; and the publication of *Love in It's Exstasy* in 1649 makes most sense as an endeavour to exploit it. The play's republication in 1981 deserves grateful attention.

In *Civil War England* (185pp. Longman, £7.95, 0 582 50286 1), Peter Young examines the military aspects of the Civil War period, and relates them to surviving sites, towns and buildings. The volume, which forms part of the Longmans Travelers Series, is thus of especial appeal to students of the period wishing to supplement their reading with visits to the sites of the major battles and sieges, such as Edgehill and Marston Moor, or Newark. The author, a former commander in the Arab Legion and Head of the Military History Department at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, from 1959 to 1969, provides detailed analysis of the engagements under such chapter headings as "Oxford in the Civil Wars", "The offensive of Hopton and the Cornish Army, 1643", "The offensive of the New Model Army", together with related information on "Arms and armour", "Siege warfare" and "King Charles II's escape after Worcester".

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STANLEY COHEN and JICK YOUNG (editors)

The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media. 506pp. Constable, £9.95, 0 09 463780 6

News is extraordinary stuff. The first sight of a newspaper would surely astonish a Martian who had been otherwise perfectly educated in both literary and spoken English. "Journalism" is too sour and narrow a term. We are in a strange world with its own language, in fact languages, for we must take account not only of Headline English - "Row Bid Probe Shock" and "Sex-change Axeman Slays Six" - but also Lobbyman's English - "Usually reliable sources suggest growing support at branch level for the leftward current within the trade union movement" - and Leaderwriter's English - "It is earnestly to be hoped that so deplorable a development . . . These various versions of speech - epulational, mummur, sermon - are so unlike their versions in life outside newspapers that they have again and again caught the attention of rival worlds of rhetoric."

The academic study of newspapers and broadcasting is still new. Like the other human sciences, it bustles on the scene, late and out of breath, long after the imaginative possibilities of the field have been exhausted; in English alone, from Dickens and Sutcliffe to Waugh's *Scrop* and Woodhouse's *Parish*, there is an exuberant literary tradition of the mimicry and mockery of newspapers, and more recent satirists, notably the writers in *Private Eye*, have taken the clichés of television to pieces.

We already know - or think we know - what newspapers are like. To justify their specialism, academics have to persuade us that we don't really know what newspapers are like until they have decoded them for us. This, to use their own favourite term, is their professional ideology. We must expect and put up with a good deal of obfuscating jargon, some borrowed from economics and sociology and particularly from the Marxist versions of those pursuits - role-playing model, deviance, socialization, ideology, paradigm, perspective, some freshly minted and adapted for the purpose, such as the consonance, periodicity, sensitivity, inventory. None of this makes for easy reading. Nor does the organization of this revised edition of Stanley Cohen's and Jick Young's collection. Seven of the papers from the first edition have been dropped, twelve new items included, parts of the linking sections rewritten. Yet what remains is often tiresomely overlapping and repetitive - particularly the chapters on press coverage of strikes and crime, which are scattered haphazardly throughout the volume. This does not so far appear to be a very disciplined discipline. A further difficulty is that the editors appear to be distinctly cleverer than their contributors; they write better, they seem more closely in touch with the real world, and by the end of the volume they have cheerfully demolished the cruder versions of media theory which some of the earlier papers, including their own and those by Stuart Hall, appear to rely on. Is this playing fair by the workforce?

It is easy enough to identify the distinguishable features of media language. In Ben Hecht's famous words: "Trying to determine what is going on in this world by reading the newspaper is like trying to tell the time by watching the second-hand of a clock." The contributors are constantly struck by the fact that nobody has bothered to write down the criteria of "newsworthiness". These criteria they themselves supply without much difficulty: a newsworthy event is one which is extraordinary, personal, relevant, violent, dramatic, comprehensible, simple, recent, or some or all of these things.

How and why is news selected in

this way? Is there some code underlying the evolution of what Stuart Hall calls this "mysterious product"? And if so, whose interest does this code serve? The argument running, somewhat erratically, throughout the book concerns the nature of the forces which result in the miracle of your daily paper. The idea that the popular press is simply popular, that it attempts no more than to give its customers what they want - subject to the exigencies of time and space - and so to increase the numbers of those customers, is here regarded as naive and inadequate. "Market Theory" is mentioned only in passing. The next stage is "Mass Manipulative Theory" - obviously subscribed to by several of the contributors - but increasingly regarded as *viewed* by the more sophisticated. In Mass Manipulative Theory, the readers are passive suckers, content to accept whatever pap the press barons choose to give them in the interests of big business and monopoly capitalism. This is clearly too crude. It lacks any kind of dialectical interaction. Mass manipulative theory has therefore been succeeded by "Left functionalism", or the "Consensual Paradigm".

According to this theory, the Hearsts and Hornsworths are not simply fooling their readers, they are assisting the reader to fool himself. We are all part of a universe of illusion. The mass media are indeed the "major carrier of ideology" - and of an ideology which maintains a delusory picture of an unjust, unequal world by representing it as just and democratic. "The image of consensus is, thus, a mystification foisted upon the public. In reality, there are conflicting definitions of what is normal and deviant." The media have to keep intact the pretence that there is only one normality and that homosexuality or homosexuality or industrial militancy are merely deviant. According to the yellow press, there are devils at work - perverters of youth, vandals and wreckers - who are responsible for those evil practices, and the reader wishes them to be identified, caught and punished. The consensus survives by having all contradictions and challenges to its monopoly of the truth attributed to these "folk devils", as Stanley Cohen calls them. The mass media are, therefore, basically *conforming*. They do not call into question the foundations of the established order. And when they have to deal with the activities of

those who do - political protesters, for example - they describe them solely in terms of the threat to public order, without reporting or discussing the content of the protest. All this naturally favours the continuance of the *status quo*, and since that *status quo* includes the existing ruling class, the mass media protect the interests of the ruling class, though this may be only partly due to the conscious actions of the rulers themselves.

Dr Young, in the most interesting essay in the book, goes one stage further beyond this consensual paradigm employed by the Glasgow Media Group and by his own earlier self. Now he argues that consensus cannot properly account for the predominance of bad news in the media. Clearly, it is this predominance which refutes crude manipulative theory. After all, in truly manipulated newspapers, like the Soviet press, the manipulators keep out almost all bad news; good news and encouraging headlines are the order of the day. So why do the Western media focus so intensely on bad news, and examine every crack in the structure of capitalism with such gusto?

Even a consensualist press would surely produce a much more straightforward picture of the world, with only a few folk-devils to blame for those evils which could not help being mentioned. Yet there is no doubt that, in order to sell newspapers, the journalists must actively ferret out the most sensational disasters and the grimmest omens. It is not for the uninitiated to follow Dr Young through every step of the labyrinthine processes by which he justifies, on Marxist grounds, a fundamental revision of the supposedly Marxist "consensual paradigm". Yet his destination is no interesting one.

His first step is to quote the words of Jorge Luisin in *The Concept of Ideology*: "Appearances are not mere illusions nor is the essence more real than the appearance. Both essence and appearance are real. In other words, reality itself is the unity of essence and appearance . . . phenomena are forms, and therefore, as real as the essence and yet invert the concealed essence."

Take "bourgeois law". In one sense, it is a fake and fraud because

all are not equal before it. On the other hand, "bourgeois legality" is an advance on feudal law (or indeed on that matter), bourgeois society creates crime which threatens the

working class and law maintains a degree of protection against the criminal, whilst legal rights allow the individual to organize politically and afford some protection against the intrusions of the ruling class and the state etc.

So bourgeois law has its uses, because the criminal does present a real danger and an injustice to the working class. Thus, the images used by the mass media, tied as they are to the world of appearance, are not mere illusions. It is their cognitive fit with reality that explains their credibility, it is their real sense of justice that generates support for them among the people rather than mere faith and mystification.

But in that case, the gutter press is right - not right to exaggerate the danger of being mugged, not right to accept police statistics at face value or to misinterpret or sensationalize them, not right to introduce a racist bias in the reporting of notepad crime, but right to report something on the subject. If, to some extent, as often as not, *ceteris paribus*, there tends to be an smoke without fire, then to report the smoke is both right and necessary. As another Marxist mediating puts it: "bourgeois ideology dominates because within serious limits, it works both cognitively and in practice." All.

It is not simply the fact that newspapers have to be sold that means they cannot be pure propaganda sheets (how long would the *Daily Express* have lasted if Lord Beaverbrook had insisted it entirely with propaganda for Empire Free Trade?). The bourgeois values of balance, lack of bias, objectivity and the creation of a public sphere where the machinations of particular groups are revealed, investigated and assessed, are progressive and set against the control function which is a result of the particular interests of the controllers.

For this reason, the media are not and cannot simply be props and comforts of the *status quo*. "The media do not merely mirror a deceptive reality nor do they simply reflect the accommodative culture of the audience. The importance of the mass media is that they cater for the desire for news stemming from contradictions at the heart of the system."

For progressive students of the media, this conclusion is obviously intended as an optimistic one. This relative autonomy allows progressive material to trickle into the newspaper.

ers, say, on strikes or the conduct of the police. The press is not the endlessly repeating clockwork toy of primitive Marxist caricature; it is and cannot help being partly open to the future, whether its owners and readers like it or not.

Now this is certainly a far more sophisticated and intelligent attitude - which may not be saying a great deal. And yet so often when a Marxist interpretation begins to take sophisticated account of reality, it begins to destroy itself. For what is the upshot of all this?

It is precisely the reinstatement of that accused distinction between fact and value which was the prime mission of Karl Marx to dissolve. Yes, we are told, after all, there is a distinction between the leading article, which gives the nasty biased opinion of the owner, and the news report on the same subject, which may give at least some true and objective information. News reports may be more accurate or less accurate, more factual or more fanciful, but they do tell us something about the world, and by dint of closer attention and conformity to the "bourgeois" values of impartiality, balance and accuracy, they can tell us more.

Now as soon as you tear apart the seamless oneness of the veil of ideology covering reality, you begin also to tear apart the illusion of illusion. For the truth is that most readers are well aware of the bias of the newspapers; they habitually read; they either "aim off" for that bias, or take no notice (perhaps because they read the paper mainly for the sections untouched by the bias - the sport, the strips, the crossword) or they actively wallow in the bias, because - again quite consciously - they share it. Nor is it impossible to separate what might be called the "external" distortions - the political bias of editor or proprietor - from the "internal" distortions - the ignorance, glibility or haste of the individual journalist.

There is no all-embracing single illusion which newspapers suffer from - although they and the journalists who write for them and the people who read them may all suffer from a variety of illusions of differing sizes. For example, it may or may not be the case that criminal statistics and the professional self-interest of the police have consistently inflated the "crime wave". It may or may not be true that the "race relations lobby" saw to it that the scale of racial trouble in English cities was consistently played down until the riots this summer. The riots were so violent and frightening that, far from being played down, it has been argued that they spread so rapidly because they were played up. All these may be distortions of the truth, but they come from different sources.

Again, it is a recurring theme in *The Manufacture of News* that strikes are always distorted in the media as representing the acts of anti-social groups rather than as inherent conflicts between the classes. But economic liberals would argue that, on the contrary, the trade unions and their "industrial actions" are too kindly represented in the media, because they are shown as legitimate and potentially beneficial to their members when in fact they are extortionate gangs which impoverish society, including trade-union members, and ought to be forbidden by law again. Newspaper reports and television bulletins are undoubtedly permeated by a prevailing view of the trade unions, but it is not one which enjoys universal support even amongst the bourgeoisie.

The accusation of the muddling of fact and value sometimes seems more applicable to media students than to the media they are studying. Their ideologizing constantly interrupts valuable examinations of how the professional deformations of producing a newspaper are liable to trivialize, sensationalize or personalize in ways which are at best bathetic and at worst deceitful.

The basic shortcoming in media

An Old Man's Reading

If I am spared I shall read *Earthly Powers* and *Barchester Towers* (for the second time) - I can't spare a dim of time, while I'm on earth I must pluck and suck these flowers

with my proboscis bealika mental proboscis and avoid night losses, I must concentrate on both the first and second rate much as a botanist collects the rare and common mosses.

I've dealt with the Homers, Virgils, Daotas - but not Cervantes, there's some good stuff (you can't get enough of Clough) still to be revealed, like a pretty girl out of her pants.

There are hundreds of poets, mostly European, you could take a flon on famous names or go on and finish Henry James who of course in his time inspired many a critical pean -

but it's all got to be done fast, a knees-up, before my eyes seize up and blur the print as a harbinger and a sizeable hint that winter is coming, when all our warm welfare will freeze up.

Gavin Ewart

IN DEFENCE OF MY COUNTRY

by Jędrzej Głertych

A book about Polish problems. 748 pages, many maps and illustrations. Price £12.00. Published by the author, 175 Carlingford Road, London N15 3ET

studies is that newspapers are studied either as history or as sociology but not both in the same time. The pitfalls of plodding through the rise of the mass media without examining the relationship between a newspaper and its readers are obvious enough. But it is even more short-sighted to try and discuss what newspapers are for, without looking back at what newspapers have been like in other countries.

From Herodotus through the years when *The Times* really was *The Thunderer* down to the present day, one consistent purpose of all travellers' tales, journals, broadsheets and intelligence has been to divert people with the marvellous, the poignant and the horrific. Newspapers like to speak of themselves as "conversing with" their readers. The late Nicholas Tomalin included, with rare frankness, a taste for gossip among the prime requirements in a journalist.

These functions are usually summed up, bleakly and typically, as the newspaper's "need to entertain its readers", as though this were simply some distasteful side-function. Yet without understanding that this is the prime function of any newspaper, the media student is liable to slip into the chief fallacy which distorts so many of these media essays: to wit, the assumption that a newspaper sets out to provide a complete picture of the world as it truly is and that my departure from this mission is likely to be the result of mystification or manipulation. The fact that the readers of the *Sun* or *Le Monde* are to be diverted in different ways

does not alter the fact that both newspapers intentionally omit huge slices of the world and the twentieth century. All human life is not there and is not meant to be. A news story is a story, and a story demands attention.

This does not license a newspaper to tell lies, any more than one would tolerate indefinitely a gossip who was constantly inventing scandals. The distinction between truth and fiction underpins not only the moral validity but the allure of news. A newspaper which tells lies is always at the mercy of another newspaper proclaiming that it will tell the True Story. This is not to romanticize or exaggerate the degree of competition or the thirst for accuracy in our daily newspapers. But the possibility of plurality - which "bourgeois" freedom keeps on permuting - is the rock upon which all seamless-illusion theories must founder. The answer to *Time* or *The Times* is always to start *Time Out*.

We do not need to go so far as to claim that the truth will prevail or that people will prefer it to their cherished illusions. Indeed, once you accept that people may well prefer their illusions, you have to deal with the question whether, in a society which is free in any worthwhile sense, the authorities have the right forcibly to rid people of their illusions. Is freedom to prevail over what you regard as the truth? If it is - which I suspect is the answer that Professor Cohen and Dr Young, if not all their contributors, would give - then they are, ultimately and crucially, bourgeois liberals like the rest of us.

Copper and conflict

By Philip Mason

RONALD PRAIN:

Reflections on an Era
Fifty years of mining in changing Africa
262pp. Worcester Park, Surrey:
Metal Bulletin Books. £10.
0 900542 52 7

In 1943, Sir Ronald Prain became the Managing Director of RST, the group whose mines produce about half the copper of what was then Northern Rhodesia and is now Zambia; he retired in 1978 after thirty-five years at the head of its affairs. In this period, Zambia became independent and also became the world's third largest producer of copper, exceeded only by the United States and Russia.

That rare statement gives no idea of the problems that faced him. It was a period of continual crisis. Zambia (to give it one name throughout) is almost wholly dependent on copper, which constitutes well over 90 per cent of its exports. But the Copper Belt (where Sir Ronald took over) was entirely dependent for power on coal from Southern Rhodesia, while the exports reached the sea by rail through Southern Rhodesia and either Mozambique or South Africa. These were always serious problems, but they became acute after Ian Smith's declaration of UDI.

Labour provided a challenge of a different order and quite as formidable. The copper fields of Northern Rhodesia began to get under way only in the 1930s. The country was sparsely inhabited by primitive tribes; it was necessary to bring skilled miners from abroad. There were heavy losses from malaria and the miners were a thousand miles from Cape Town; wages therefore had to be high and there was a copper bonus that made them higher. A skilled white miner would work with a gang of ten or twelve unskilled Africans and would earn ten to twelve times what they did. But by the late 1940s it was already becoming clear that some Africans were ready to move into semi-skilled and even skilled jobs, while the white miners had a standard of living far better than miners enjoyed anywhere else in the world.

A reorganization of the labour system was needed on grounds of busi-

ness efficiency but was rapidly becoming a social and political necessity too. The European Mineworkers Union, however, had established, when copper was vital to the war effort, what was in practice an industrial colour bar. They would not agree to a reorganization that permitted the advancement of Africans into successively more skilled jobs. To add to the difficulties, the group controlling the other half of the Copper Belt had its headquarters in South Africa and was hampered by South African views of race relations.

Nonetheless, by patient diplomacy backed by determination, Sir Ronald broke the colour bar in 1955. In 1959, he made a public statement - revolutionary at the time and coming from such a source - contradicting the accepted view among Europeans in the two Rhodesias that economic progress would reconcile the Africans to the Federation of their two countries with Nyasaland. On the contrary, he argued, they put social and political advances before economic and such advances were inevitable. The question was whether they were in come peacefully and with good will or by violent revolution.

These were important contributions to the progress of Northern Rhodesia to independence in 1964. Sir Ronald's influence behind the scenes was even more powerful and was continuous. It can be argued that he was as much as any one man responsible for the peaceful transfer of power in Zambia. In the five years after independence, he had to cope with the problems raised by UDI and prepare for the nationalization which he saw as inevitable. In short, he continued, in his own words, to "apply some realism to a developing situation".

This is a characteristic understatement. This is the autobiography of a man who played a big part in the practical business of producing wealth but also used his unusual political and social foresight for peaceful development in the revolutionary circumstances which everywhere accompanied the liquidation of Empire. There is much here of importance to the historian if he reads between the lines, but the general reader will have to pick his way through a good deal about the financial operations of mining groups which is of interest only to specialists. In the metal industry, and he will need some knowledge of the background to perceive the full significance of what was achieved.

Working practices

By J. E. Mortimer

GUY ARNOLD:

The Unions
240pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.
0 241 0007 7

The special attribute of this book is that it reports objectively the points of view of a wide range of industrial relations commentators and participants. They include prominent employers, trade union leaders, politicians and representatives from public agencies dealing with industrial relations problems. Guy Arnold interviewed many of them, in most cases with the help of a tape recorder, and he has put down faithfully and succinctly what they told him. Nevertheless, he is not just a reporter. His own views and conclusions emerge not obtrusively, but in the manner in which he assembles and presents the evidence. He is more explicit in his last chapter when he asks what are the solutions and offers some answers.

This book is unlikely to give encouragement to those who think that changes in legislation provide the key to improvements whether in industrial relations or economic performance. Only a very few of those quoted are looking for drastic changes in the law affecting trade unionism. Most put their emphasis elsewhere. The author calls for reform but in a wider context of economic and social change. He points to the necessity of economic growth and shows that the fear of unemployment, which is very real at the present time, tends to make people restrictive and less receptive to innovation.

Mr Arnold stresses also the need for more investment. In this he endorses the observations of many of those whom he interviewed that Britain's low level of investment over many years has been a major factor, and to some the main factor, in Britain's relative decline. Industry cannot keep abreast of developments

in other countries if the level of investment is low. Put in other words, it means that productivity is determined not so much by the intensity of manual effort as by the kind of tools and equipment with which men work. It is technology and not muscle power that really matters.

But why has there been a low level of investment in Britain? Do labour practices inhibit investment? The main body of evidence in this book is that whilst there is plenty of room for improvements in working arrangements, the low level of investment is due principally to the existence of more profitable investment opportunities overseas and to the burden in Britain of operating very old-established industries. Other countries developed their industries at a later date or had the "benefit" of starting anew after the destruction of the Second World War. The author suggests that "investment could still be greatly increased were government to adopt policies which forced reinvestment". He urges that North Sea oil profits should be reinvested and that in the private sector legislation should require that a proportion of all profit should be automatically put back into industry.

Two other propositions put forward are, first, that there should be a return to strong management and, secondly, that the educational system should be reformed. Weak management, he argues, has been a factor in the decline of British industry, and the primary responsibility for the state of British industry rests, and must always rest, with management. The existing educational system is too much geared towards the humanities and industry is held in low esteem.

Arnold deplores what he feels is the partisanship concerning the conduct of the British economy. Britain has a mixed economy but the political system ensures that there is a constant see-saw about how to maintain the low level of investment over many years has been a major factor, and to some the main factor, in Britain's relative decline. Industry cannot keep abreast of developments

What, it might be asked, has all this to do with the trade unions? The answer follows from Arnold's diagnosis and from his suggested solutions. Britain's economic problems are not due primarily to trade unions, whose failings and weaknesses are symptomatic of Britain's ailments rather than their cause. The unions are not too strong; indeed, in many respects they are weaker than they should be. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that much of the time spent preparing for new legislation to reduce the strength of the unions is, at best, irrelevant to the problem of revitalizing the economy and, at worst, a deliberate diversion from the real task.

In the chapters of his book Arnold, or his reported commentators, reminds readers of facts and incidents which most will have forgotten or never known. It now seems incredible, for example, that between 1938 and 1945, covering the whole period of the Second World War, prices rose in Britain by only forty-five per cent. Vic Feather, when asked who, in his opinion, had been the best Prime Minister for the unions to deal with, replied: "That is the easiest question I've had - without doubt, Mr Heath." Albert Booth, former Secretary of State for Employment, and always a very reasonable and diligent minister, said that in his view a weakness of the trade union movement was its failure to give more consideration to political decisions that had a bearing on their members' interests. Len Murray in his assessment of trade union power said that ultimate power is with the employer. If the unions did not exist the employers could not determine all matters affecting employment, including wages and conditions; thus trade unions have always been concerned with power, with curbing the unilateral power of employers or, more accurately, with striving for arrangements to ensure that power is shared.

The merit of this book is that it provides a platform for a wide variety of opinions about trade unionism, but leads gently to the conclusion that "unions-bashing" is in no sense a substitute for a strategy to bring about economic recovery. It is not even a corollary to such a strategy.

If I could sleep standing, I would wait here
Forever, become a landmark, something fixed

and Government back-benders, a government measure may be modified or withdrawn; this constitutes a kind of reserve power on which the ability of the House to scrutinize and influence the government is largely founded.

The second edition of *A guide to the official publications of the European Communities* (332pp. Mansell. £21.0 7201 1590 6), compiled by John Jeffries, records all the documents published up to the end of 1979 by the ECSC, EEC, and Euratom. It classifies and lists the Treaties, bulletins, reports, studies - both general and non-statistical and, in a substantial chapter, the many publications of Eurostat (the Statistical Office of the European Communities) as well as published sources for debates and other documents of the European Parliament, hearings, before the European Court of Justice, and some indications of mechanical information retrieval bases.

An allegiance to the Clyde

By Anthony Thwaite

For tug crews or seafaring passengers to point at a place.
An example of being part of a place.

DOUGLAS DUNN:
St. Kilda's Parliament
87pp. Faber. £3.
0 571 11770 8

In 1970, Douglas Dunn wrote, with what one takes to be a certain guarded pawkiness: "I'm on a train that puffs between two stations. One is Romantic Sleep, the other is Social Realism. If I ever got off the train, I don't know which station it will be at." Dunn's debut, *Terry Street* (1969), was chiefly at the Social Realist end of the line, though it also had some imaginative transcriptions of dreams which might have been experienced in Romantic Sleep. Even what *Inn Hamilton* - no doubt intending praise but without evident relish - called "convincing sketches of at least the surfaces of humdrum urban living" had perspectives and depths far beyond the faithful and disappointing art of photography. In the second half of the book, away from the decrepitudes and dualisms of *Terry Street* itself, there were such inventions as "A Poem in Praise of the British", a dream-journey

into the archives of light, where great- ness had been
With the dainty tea cup and the black gun.
And dancing dragons in the fields of heaven.

But for present purposes, as an early link with Dunn's fifth and most recent book, *St. Kilda's Parliament*, the poem to turn back to in *Terry Street* is "Landscape with One Figure".

The scene here is not the émigré's Hull or the Humber but his native Scotland, by the Clyde. In three four-line stanzas, the river - apparently at some distance, but within sight and not imagined in retrospect - is evoked, with its shipyard cranes, gulls, a tug, mud. Then, in the final stanza, the poet establishes his own presence, itself a kind of dream:

If I could sleep standing, I would wait here
Forever, become a landmark, something fixed

Some of the most directly moving of these new poems are, as one

might suppose, the most personal, such as "Washing the Coins", a childhood memory of lifting potatoes, among casual workers who were mostly Irish, of being mistaken for an Irish boy, and of being apologized to for the mistake:

She knew me, but she couldn't tell my name
From an Irish boy's, and she apologized
And roughed my hair as into my cupped hands
She poured a dozen pennies of the coin
And placed two florins there, then cupped her hands
Around my hands, like praying
It is not good to feel you have no future.
My cloaked hands turned coins to
I unclipped all my own buttons and laid
My mother can't find a button for me.
We halved two wings and we scribbled them clean.
Once all that sentiment was washed away
That residue of field ended on my money.
I filled the basin to its brim with cold
And when the water scalded I could see
Two English kings among their drowned Britannias.

I quote the conclusion to this poem at some length partly to demonstrate something that has been called in question in remarks on Dunn's earlier poetry: his technique. Even some of his admirers have qualified their admiration with censure of "clumsiness" or "blackness", and there is some justification for this in *The Happier Life*, *Love or Nothing* and, to a lesser extent, in *Barbarians*. As Dunn stretched and exercised himself after *Terry Street* (discovering and ransacking the Symbolists, falling in and out of love with Marxism, trying on new subjects and new styles, restlessly keeping on thinking and not always seeming to know what to do with his thoughts), his technical address wasn't always in concert with his imagination.

In *St. Kilda's Parliament*, he has hammered (or welded, or spun) them together, almost without exception. The unrhymed lumbic pentameter of "Washing the Coins" is steadily, miraculously controlled. The rhymed quatrains in "The Harp of Renfrewshire", "War Blinded", "Witch Girl" and "The Gallery" are succinct and resonant. "John Wilson in Greenock, 1786", a dramatic monologue, is written in precisely wrought heroic couplets, echoing and taking off from their angustian originals. "Tannahill", an elegy for the weaver-poet, is written in a true Barrow stanza with none of the comic periness Gavin Ewart, John Fuller and James Fenton have recently grafted on to it.

A washer's craft would teach a man
To live with art as an artisan.
As you could weave, teach me to scan
And turn a rhyme.
Fraternal, like Catullus
His low sublime.

In "Remembering Lunch", Dunn keeps eighty-two long, serpentine, subordinate-clause-studded lines moving with a useful, comic, self-mocking, in the end profoundly affecting grace, perfectly judged. And in "Green Docks" (an address to a boy "admitted, and slightly, by Sir Walter Scott"), a complicated sixteen-line form ascends through eight stanzas with a mounting rhetoric Dunn has never equalled before.

To make these technical judgments is not to reduce the poems to exercises, or to regard their manners as simply well-cut but discardable or arbitrary clothes for their matters. The poems "effects" - their technical fingerings and their consequent results - are the products of an imaginative spaciousness which has learned how to orchestrate a whole range of feelings: sad, wry, indignant, ribald (see particularly "The Miniature Metro", in which Rimbaud is encountered in Inchinnan), sly, affectionate, and - in the last poem in the book, "Ratouille" -

Our lives of courtesy, ways of describing love,
And these, in a good-natured land, are ways to weep.
True comfort as you wipe your eyes and try to live.

headlong at the theory. He takes as two typical dominant views of autobiography the "Romantic spiral" of M. H. Abrams and the "deconstructive labyrinth" of Paul de Man and he invokes Nietzsche and Hegel on the nature of self-consciousness. The work of Paul Ricoeur provides his main inspiration. In what he calls Ricoeur's "dialectical hermeneutics" O'Hara finds a congenial notion of literature as an imaginative construction of selfhood, which he sees as "unusually appropriate for the study of autobiography". The "tragic knowledge" of his life is the recognition that any such imaginative construction must ultimately be incomplete.

Much of the theorizing is stimulating, but it would be more useful for a wider audience if the author had more of a talent for the clarification and economical appropriation of difficult ideas. Whilst an account of, say, any two of the philosophers he uses would have been most welcome, taken all together they tend to dull the appetite for what is to follow.

The main course is a sequential reading of the several sections of *Autobiographies*, in which O'Hara traces Yeats's attempt to order his past experiences and thereby to survive a crisis in his creativity. He suggests that Yeats's portraits of his family and literary acquaintances are not strictly representational but are used as either positive or negative models for his self-construction. For O'Hara the main task of Yeats's enquiry is the discovery and confrontation of his Daimonic "anti-self": the image of what he would like to be, which emerges through this

M. C. Seymour is the editor of the recently published *Selections from Hoccleve* (151pp. Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press. Paperback, £4.95), to which he contributes an introduction and 38pp of commentary on the poems. These include five excerpts from Hoccleve's major work, the *Regiment of Princes*, completed in 1411.

Confronting the anti-self

By Richard Brown

DANIEL T. O'HARA:

Tragic Knowledge: Yeats's "Autobiography" and Hermeneutics
192pp. Columbia University Press.
\$29.50
0 231 05204 0

Yeats's *Autobiographies* have often been plundered for short extracts to be used as annotations to his poetry, but they have rarely been treated as important either in their own right or as a starting point for an interpretation of his work as a whole. They lack the interpretative challenge presented by the better-known prose work, *A Vision*. Their less presiding attractions are an episodic structure (both in the writing itself and in that the work consists of separately composed sections) and the continual self-conscious presence of the "I" who is remembered.

It is, however, precisely these qualities which attract Daniel T. O'Hara to the *Autobiographies*. For him their self-consciousness provides the opportunity for an enquiry into the theory of autobiography and "hermeneutics", and the structure of the book is not accidental but is intentional and significant, marking discrete stages of Yeats's coming to self-knowledge. O'Hara even makes a point of using the title of the American edition, which is *Autobiography* in the singular, to support his argument for the coherence of the design.

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Jonathan Cape

commentary

A choice of colossi

By Tom Phillips

Egyptian Sculpture:
The New Exhibition
British Museum

Let's face it. Egyptian art is a bit stodgy. Much of it has a production-line look and many of the standard models seem to have undergone only minor modifications over millennia. To look at them with own cultural expectations can give rise to doubts as to the inventiveness of artists or the courage of patrons.

It is more profitable to view Egyptian artefacts as we do forms of ritual art, where we are used to accepting that the object is locked in context, ritual and function, and where, once in form is found that answers it, need, there is little point in changing it. Thus, whereas chrono-

logy tempts us to compare the artistic achievement of the ancient Egyptians with that of the Greeks, it would be more useful to relate it to, say, that of the Yoruba or Luba. The art of a tribe being necessarily conservative and inflexible, the untalented are able to survive since traditional conventions and devices can be handed on as a kit. The remarkable artist can still emerge to make a cliché breathe (or even sing); meanwhile the pedestrian chap (and these predominated in Ancient Egypt) can make a living. When change comes in the wake of conquerors, such art, with its lack of resilience, suffers almost total collapse. For almost two thousand years, the descendants of the Ancient Egyptians have been artistically impotent.

The British Museum's own Egyptian collection is prodigious in quantity and scale, and the new installation attempts to give a more coherent view of its holding. Some real effort has been made to provide a general architectural framework for pieces, though many are still left stranded and, without the context of the particular building whose inside or outside they complemented, look incomplete. Certainly this display is more sensitive than the big-equals-imposing-equals-good installation that was so familiar. We now have a more balanced group of objects, colossi and trinkets both have their place.

A hint of what we lack is given by the stone "false doors" (exits for spirits) which are the only self-contained combinations of sculpture, architecture and inscription on view. Otherwise, the best advantaged items are those in the side galleries where suitably Nilotic top-lighting suddenly makes shallow inscriptions sharp and tightly-drawn, and makes forms which seem under-modelled come alive with unexpected shadow and detail. While such lighting helps the exhibits, it renders some of the perspex labels eye-rubbingly illegible. The general effect of these well-proportioned stone chambers is appealing and avoids the peep-show look of so many recent exhibitions of the art of far times and places.

From the purely aesthetic standpoint (museums currently have great difficulty in deciding on the emphasis of their collections) most of the pieces are workaday in quality and it would be difficult to single out an incontrovertible masterpiece, though

there are many incidental beauties, especially in the bas-reliefs (for example the twelfth-dynasty *Stela of Sirenetut* with its lyrical still-life).

Script, as the presence of the Rosetta Stone at the entrance to the exhibition announces, plays an important linking role. It is difficult to look at a lot of hieroglyphics, especially for the non-reader, since they all, however translated, appear to be about birdwatching. Close inspection reveals great difference in standards, with some extremely slack in execution and others (as on the false door of Ptahshepses) maintaining an inexhaustible tautness of drawings.

The informational side of the display is reasonably well-handled. Large panels with clear maps describe the main periods. Some of the labels on individual pieces nudge one into premature appreciation in a way that will offend the knowledgeable or independently minded visitor: there are also some expressly aimed at the blind ("This colourful and lively painting...") and others that misleadingly imply adverse criticism ("Although the ears are overlarge...").

In the middle of things the space seems neatly handled, and it is pleasant to change levels and to alternate between open and closed areas, but the initial impact as one enters is marred by the manner in which the long line of huge statues stretching into the distance gives a jumbled vista of eyebrows, foreheads and hats.

Cheerful cherub

By Keith Walker

Heaven and Hell
Royal Court Theatre

A couple of years ago a hook was published called *Boswell's Clap and other essays*. The subject figures large in Dusty Hughes's play *Heaven and Hell* which the Edinburgh Traverse Company have brought to the Royal Court. To be sure, Boswell hardly avoids mention of his clap in the journals, on which Hughes's work is based. One of Boswell's attacks gives rise to a horribly plausible scene where Samuel Johnson, under the impression that Boswell is suffering from a cold, sends his medical factotum Robert Levett, his apron drenched in blood, carrying a variety of plumber's tools and butcher's weapons, to minister to him.

Hughes has done his homework in the journals and elsewhere, and is confident enough to poke fun at niggling scholars in his programme note. *Heaven and Hell* can't be taken seriously as historical reconstruction, but then, perhaps serious historical reconstruction would have led to a duller evening. The "Heaven" I take it, is Boswell's release in London after confinement in Edinburgh, his meeting with Samuel Johnson, and his amours. "Hell" is the clap, or possibly disappointment at not getting preferment. It is also Johnson's "fearful imaginings": his terror before the prospect of eternal damnation, his disquiet at supposed desires to be confined with chains. A leopard in a playpen simulating masturbation apparently represents Johnson's guilt on that score, too.

Heaven and Hell begins with a prayer and ends with a song. In between various characters fill in and out - some Scotch croonies of Boswell, Johnson's companion the blind Miss Williams, Goldsmith, Garrick, whores, servants, lords, etc. - and the whole is loosely held together by the framework of Boswell's experiences. Jimmy Chisholm, a cherubic Boswell, retains his essential innocence even while plunging his hands with what seems like brutal abruptness under a girl's skirts. But the real triumph of the evening is Jonathan

Adams's enormous lumbering Johnson. Adams bears a strong resemblance to Reynolds's last portrait of Johnson, and instead of sinking the table, leaping up, and exclaiming "Sir -" in ringing tones, he remains slumped silent for long periods, and when he speaks mumbles in a mid-lones accent. A pity that everyone refers to him as "Dr" Johnson, but the portrait is a good deal closer to the historical Johnson than any other I have seen, even if some of his lines are in Boswell's posthumous published versions.

The rest is padding. References to '45 and Prince Charles which may have stirred hearts in Edinburgh were largely wasted on the Royal Court audience the night I was there. Boswell's attempt to convert Hume passed too quickly for the joke to come across - that Boswell's visit cheers up the dying Hume while depressing Boswell. The music is intrusive (if it's the eighteenth century it must be Vivaldi) and reminded me how much Johnson disliked it. But he liked listening to bagpipes. Hughes might have done something with that.

Somehow, however, the evening was not a waste. It was a pleasure to see a play that was not a waste of time.

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commentary

What ho, Hollywood

By T. J. Binyon

Wodehouse Season
National Film Theatre

Over on the South Bank some able malleableman has worked out that almost exactly 100 years have gone by since October 15, 1881, when one Wodehouse, Petham Grenville, was added to the strength at Guildford. As a centenary tribute the National Film Theatre has been showing over the past few weeks a number of films written by Wodehouse, based on his work, or having some connection with him.

While the motive behind the tribute can only be welcomed, its manner is slightly odd: to commemorate Wodehouse through films is rather like drinking a toast to the memory of Galileo through wood in sarsaparilla. For the author and the silver screen never really hit it off together. Not so but for otherwise was his relationship with the theatre. In association with Jerome Kern and Guy Bolton he had more musical comedy successes than one could shake a stick at. "Bolton and Wodehouse and Kern are my favourite indoor sport", wrote Dorothy Parker. In his books the heroines are often girls from the chorus; the heroes write musical comedies themselves; there is even a note of affection in his descriptions of such appalling events as an out-of-town opening in Atlantic City in the middle of the winter (in *Bill the Conqueror*): a note that is conspicuously absent from the descriptions of Hollywood life in, for example, *Laughing Gas*.

Wodehouse first went to what W.C. Fields terms Dollywood-on-the-Pacific in 1930, under contract to MGM. In a newspaper interview at the end of his first year he indignantly expressed his surprise at having been paid \$104,000 for doing nothing, and as a result parted some what sulkily from the studio. In 1936, however, he and MGM - both older, but no wiser - came together once more, when he was paid even more to do even less. This time the affair lasted for only six months. "Lay off old Pop Wodehouse is the advice I would give to any studio that wants to get on in the world. There is no surer road to success", he wrote in a letter.

His Hollywood characters are much-married movie magnates, such as Ivor Llewellyn, President of the Super-Llewellyn Motion Picture Corporation, or tigress-like stars who carry their screen characteristics uncomfortably over into private life. The studio executives are surrounded by an obsequious hierarchy of yes-men, nodders, and nodders' assis-

Some way behind, panting furiously, come the successive attempts to put Wodehouse's prose on the screen without the help of music. Quite successful, though slight in the extreme, are the BBC's versions of some of the Mulliner stories, in each case with John Alderton as the Mulliner nephew involved. It probably seemed at the time a stroke of genius to cast Ian Carmichael as Bertie Wooster and Dennis Price as Jeeves in an earlier BBC series, but the result is disappointing. Wodehouse's most famous lyric, "Bill" (I used to dream that I would discover/The perfect lover/some day...), and *Till the Clouds Roll By*, the story of Jerome Kern's life, with three Wodehouse lyrics.

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P. G. Wodehouse and Sir H. J. C. Grierson, each having received a *Doctorate of Letters* from the University of Oxford, in 1939 - from Joseph Connolly's P. G. Wodehouse: An Illustrated Biography (160pp. Eel Pie. £3.95. 0 906008 441).

taunts. Nostalgia is rife: "I married the cousin of one of the top executives and from that moment never looked back", one character remarks, adding that he hopes to be given brevet rank as brother-in-law in the not too distant future.

For the writer, Hollywood is a prison: it's an image Wodehouse returns to almost obsessively. He writes of an oil-man being shanghaied from the streets of Los Angeles: "When he came to himself he was in a cell on the Perfected Zizzenbaum lot with paper and a sharpened pencil before him, and stern-faced men in felt hats and raincoats were wagging rubber hoses at him and telling him to get busy and turn out something with lots of sex in it, but not too much, because of Will Hays." And of himself he remarks: "I got away from Hollywood at the end of the year because the goiter's daughter smuggled me in a file in a meat pie, but I was there long enough to realize what a terribly demoralizing place it is. The whole atmosphere there is one of insidious deceit and subterfuge."

Of the rather motley collection of films assembled by the NPT perhaps the best are the musicals *A Damsel in Distress* (1937), adapted from a Wodehouse novel, with Fred Astaire and Joan Fontaine, and *Anything Goes* (1936 and 1956; Bing Crosby in both), a screen version of a Wodehouse/Bolton show. Then come three films which have very little to do with Wodehouse: the 1936 and 1951 versions of *Shane*, only present because they both contain Wodehouse's most famous lyric, "Bill" (I used to dream that I would discover/The perfect lover/some day...), and *Till the Clouds Roll By*, the story of Jerome Kern's life, with three Wodehouse lyrics.

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though still shows Arthur Treacher as an imposing Jeeves, his forehead unmistakably bulging with fish.

It's the portrayal of the Wodehousian young man in spats which seems the key to getting the film right. Robert Montgomery makes a very good stab at the problem in *Peckinpah Jim* (1936), opening with an impressively oiled, deeply felt hangerover scene. Indeed, it is a pleasant film altogether, with a charming heroine (Madge Evans), and some good comic playing from Eric Blore and Robert Benchley. In *Brother Alfred* (1932), based on a Wodehouse play, and *Lame to Me* (1933), adapted from *Leave It to Smith*, Gene Gerrard redeems the stiltedness of the surroundings (including an only too obvious backcloth) with two nimble performances. *The Girl on the Boat* (1962), however, is an unmitigated disaster.

Sadly, however, even the best of these films comes nowhere near matching the quality of the originals. Wodehouse once remarked that his books were a "sort of musical comedy without music". Perhaps the only way of overcoming the inherent coarseness of film, and given an adaptation the lightness and delicacy of the original, is to put the music in.

Beastly battles

By Hugo Williams

The Final Conflict
Various cinemas

It looks like Rosanno Brazzi. It sounds like Rosanno Brazzi. Can this balding monk ruffling pages to a dim library be the singing playboy from *South Pacific*? Looking more tragically out of place than ever, Rosanno is the successor to the amusing Raf Vallone's Bugenbinger of *The Omen*, whose cancer-riddled body is lowered to the earth by a falling lightning conductor. A lesser man than Raf, Rosanno's jowls shake as he prepares to confront the Anti-Christ in the shape of Damien Thorn, now US ambassador. He recruits a bunch of eccentric monks and gives them each a special dagger. "Ee 'as zee birthmark of Satan 'ere", he tells them, pointing to the back of his head. "Six... six... (pause for over-acting) SIX".

In *Omen One*, these "Knives of Magic" had to be placed in the body of the Anti-Christ in the form of a cross. Not any more. Now only one is needed, which is just as well, since the devil dispatches the first six of these shambling monastics with barely a snigger, leaving only Rosanno.

Ever since *The Exorcist*, devil pictures have depended heavily on scholastic hocus-pocus to keep laughter in abeyance through boredom. This time it is *The Book of Hebron* that is dusted off. Rosanno pulls his chin for consternation. He can hardly read what it says, it is so dark in the library: "Out of the Angel Isle shall bring forth a deliverer who shall battle with the Beast." Oh no, as if he hasn't got enough on his plate, it looks like the Second Coming is on the way. Through a giant telescope we see three stars on a collision course. "No collision", says Rosanno. "Is alignment. Is Holy

Trinity." Later, what looks like an atomic bomb explosion happens up there. A double race is now on. Can Rosanno get to Damien with the last dagger before Damien, already weakened by the Nazarene's birth, can slaughter all the male children born on March 15? "Liquidate the Nazarene", he tells his secretary. "Me? How?" asks the overworked disciple. I thought by this time that the new Christ was bound to be a girl and slip through that way, but he turns out to be the offspring of Damien's secretary, who sneakily pleads that his son was born the day before, thus saving Mankind.

It's amazing how touching is the spectacle of the devil going hand-some down to the forces of moral rectitude and family life, leaving the rest of us to what Damien calls "a numbing eternity in the flaccid bosom of Christ" (and Rosanno Brazzi). All Damien wants to do, after all, is destroy the world, an understandable point of view. He has this international charity and armaments organization which specializes in natural disasters. "When I go, we all go" is his laid-back philosophy. Sam Neil, hard to recognize from his fine debut in *My Brilliant Career*, gives a sympathetic account of the devil's predicament: "I offer you the ecstasy of my father's kingdom" is the humanly vague promise he offers the gathered children of Beelzebub, echoing his opponent's election promises in time-honoured fashion. In bed, he is more specific: "Beauty is pain... pleasure is pain" he explains to the TV-link woman as he firmly sodomizes her. "Is pain pain?" you could hear her asking, in between having her face sautéed into the pillow. Needless to say, Rosanno knifes her son by accident, but she gets her own back on her violator with the same dagger, and that's the end of it. Or is it? "Nazarene... You have won NOTHING" groans the bleeding Damien, getting in the last word.

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Oxford University Press

commentary

Revelations and simplifications

By Peter Conrad

Fidelio
Welsh National Opera
The Beggar's Opera
Scottish Opera

Harry Kupfer's hortatory, aggressive new *Fidelio* — no hymn to conjugal devotion but a study of history's will in action — has of course antagonized the critics, who don't like having their preconceptions ruffled. Nevertheless, its excellence is its truth to the work. According to Anthony Peattie's excellent programme, Kupfer denies that *Fidelio* is a mess of inconsistent genres or a symphony with voices. It contains contradictions, but it works through them dialectically as it goes on, raising material reality to predictive vision and universalizing its own marital anecdote. Leonore, vowing to save the prisoner whether he's her husband or not, has cut off the confining emotions of emotional individuality to become a symbolically impersonal liberator, and brands Pizarro with the same symbolic generality in the epilogue hurled at him in "Abscheulicher!" The offbeat of the chorus in the final scene promotes her personal victory into an augury, the announcement of a millennium. Though Richard Armstrong has chosen to include the third *Leonore* overture between the rescue in the dungeon and the day of judgment above, this habit serves the same purpose — in recapitulating the drama as a symphony, the interpolated overture re-interprets the action and sees it now, with the benefit of historical hindsight, as an allegory.

In Kupfer's production, the dialectic has already begun its provocation of change in the first scene between Jaquino and Marzelline, whose trivial squabble is interrupted by those fateful knocks on the door: history's portentous summons to its human agents. Kupfer makes Marzelline a cramped, tormented deputy of Leonore, dreaming of freedom and angrily defending herself against Jaquino's importunings with a flower pot, a laundry basket and the kitchen

furniture; he is a rigid, respectable clerk, one of the fascist state's innocuous desk-murderers.

The production perceives the mutuality of demoralization in these oppressed conditions. Where freedom is denied, people learn to do without it and, if it's restored, they find they're afraid of it, since servitude has been so deeply ingrained in their lives. Thus Rocco — scuttling unshamed, with head bowed, counselling the wisdom of self-interest and survival in opposition to the selfless and symbolic generality of Leonore's motives — is as much a prisoner as the wretches he locks up. His interludes likewise, rather than gladly erupting into the courtyard, live lost the habit of being free, dread Leonore (who is after all a goner), and even when permitted to roam at will prefer to patrol in a supervised circle. As soon as the guards return, they congregate into a felled mob, huddle collectivized by terror. Like Rocco or the obedient automaton Jaquino, they have renounced vulnerable personal individuality for the comfort of a traumatized conformity.

But this colonized and whimpering crowd, in Kupfer's audacious staging of the final scene, recovers its fortitude and redefines itself as the Marxist mass — the eclectic aggregate of the world's victims, united in the rejection of their chains. The chorus which overrules the private rejoicing of Leonore and Florestin is here the imperative voice of historical inevitability. Universalizing the action means internationalizing it, and Kupfer's chorus comprises a global congress of revolutionaries. Ranked on a tiered platform as a coalition of Iranian agitators, Sandinistas, Polisario and delegates of the PLO, mortar-boarded intellectuals and infant-torn peasants and commissars, beatniks in baggy sweaters, all of them vomited forth from the mouth of Rudé's sculptural "Marseillaise" on the Arc de Triomphe, the indiscriminate litter of the French Revolution. The platform on which the chorus is arranged is the secular altar of a new faith — dialectical materialism. Among the insurgents stands a

jaundiced angel, but this altar testifies to the unseating of the gods and the regeneration of humanity. During the scene-change a hail of rubble, broken chains, banners and upended torches tumble from the deconsecrated sky, like the debris of a ruined Valhalla. Mythology has been supplanted by history. The divine edicts which govern the ancient world from above cede to the human initiative of politics.

Richard Armstrong conducts with the vigour and impetus the production requires, and there are superb performances from Helen Field as the harried, rebellious Marzelline, Richard Morton as the banally evil Jaquino, and Stafford Dean as a Rocco disgusted with his own compromises. But an interpretation which insists on the avenging symbolic force of the protagonists, rather than force of the protagonists, rather than force of the protagonists, needs superhuman vocalists — the valiant trumpet-tones of a Nilsson to defy Pizarro; the cavernous anguish of a Vickers, to make "Gott! Welch Dunkel hier!" a lament for all benighted men. Dennis Bailey's voice is huge, though raw, and the Leonore of Anne Evans is strained and squally, unequal to the demands made on it by Beethoven's music and Kupfer's fanatical direction.

The Scottish Opera *Beggar's Opera* isn't beggarly enough, and is ill-conceived — lavish when it ought to be penurious — and shamelessly executed. At its showing at the Dominion Theatre even the lighting crew were cross-eyed, so that the characters on stage groped about in gloom while nonplussed customers in a sidebox flinched from the celebrity of a vagrant spot. One good idea lies undeveloped in David Williams's singing: the *Beggar's Opera*'s prologue becomes a disarmed satirist, a scruffy turn-of-mind singing against the vices of the age, while the *Player* is cast as the officious representative of The Management, who, pleading that operas must always have happy endings, compels the author to commute Macheath's sentence and thereby reduce his satire to an entertainment. David Williams, however — ignoring his own percep-

tion about the friction in the work between theatrical vulgarity and the low, proverbial cunning of the ballads, between the aggrandisement and inflation of music and the analytical scepticism of words, between what Brecht (who with Weill made his own version of *The Beggar's Opera*) sees as bloated, costly, culinary opera, and devalued, denotive operetta costing only three pence and afforded by merchants — proceeds in accordance with the slick precepts of The Management, serving up the piece as a harmlessly smutty pantomime. Guy Woolfenden's orchestra crows in prurient delight or bumps and grinds like a cabaret ensemble, while Mrs Peachum squats on her chamber-pot, Mrs Trapes does a superannuated knees-up, and Macheath's release is fêted in a denunciation of the "Hallelujah!" chorus.

Thomas Allen's performance as Macheath has been correspondingly misdirected. Gay's is an Emipsonian pastoral, a double plot which deals in distorting similitudes. His rogue models himself on the heroes he reads about in romances, and is both a shoddy parody of his exemplars and also, because of his adventurous rapacity and generous profligacy, a franker and more primally heroic creature than they in their chivalric insipidity can ever dare to be. Because David Williams hasn't kept Gay's ironies and inversions in focus, Thomas Allen treats the jokes with good-natured literalness. He is courtly to the whores he feasts, rather than relishing the cruel jest of treating them as if they were ladies. He behaves, and of course sings, on the assumption that this is an opera and not a parody of one. Thus Macheath's prison monologue, an anthology of ballad snatches suggesting the second-hand and opportunistic nature of his sentiments, is too heartfelt in Thomas Allen's performance, not impudent enough in its quotations: musically as well as dramatically Macheath lives by misappropriation, stealing tunes as unreflectively as he robs coaches. Woolfenden's band is equally mistaken about its function in this scene, and thunders out a brassy threnody, tak-

Photogenic

By Richard Jacobs

Ivo Pogorelich
Royal Festival Hall

The organizers were very sorry that Ivo Pogorelich had to change his announced programme. But he might as well have been playing Irving Berlin, the electric guitar or perhaps tennis for all some of the audience cared. This was not a concert to listen to. It was a concert to be at and to look at.

There was Deutsche Grammophon's display-piece to look at. This showed Ivo looking as if he might play Chopin after dinner if pressed by an indulgent hostess. But I was Malcolm Crowther who stole the show. Unprecedentedly, the Festival Hall gave Crowther space in the foyer for an exhibition ("designed by Michael Haynes") of his photographs — all of Ivo. They ranged from the elegantly informal to the elegantly posed. Perhaps the prettiest was Ivo smoking a black cigarette. The ash is elegantly about to fall off. Others may prefer Ivo as Nijinsky in minor repertoire cast-offs or as Sting from The Police. That was on the programme. Best of all for some, there was the audience to look at each other.

Festival Hall audiences are pretty skilled at coughing and reading the programme during recitals, but, as experts in lining, a capacity crowd trying to be besotted on Ivo can

have no equal. It takes real flair to cough at every still-point in opus 111, gentle to share a snuffly joke in the last variation (the couple in front of me), divine inspiration to fish in a handbag for and then need an international dialling-code book in the last few bars. (It might have been a railway timetable or a knitting pattern. I saw it through blood, so I'm not sure.)

So what's Ivo like? To look at he's just as agreeable as his publicity suggests: he's particularly graceful at taking a bouquet and examining it disdainfully as he leaves the platform. As a pianist (just to mention it) he's very accomplished in rapid finger-work a secco, clever with Scarlatti (like the much more tasteful and pretty Andras Schiff), powerfully clanging and coyly fligee with Schumann, and impertinent with tempo in late Beethoven. This much anticipated "interpretation" turned out to be a tissue of self-regarding, wilfully elegant moments. In short, he played Beethoven like Liszt and is being lionized in much the same way.

Kent Opera's 1981 autumn season opened with Nicholas Hytner's production of *The Marriage of Figaro* (conducted by Roger Norrington and in a new translation by Michael Irwin) which can be heard at the Assembly Hall, Tunbridge Wells on October 29. A revival of *Eugene Miller's* 1977 production of *Eugene O'Neill* will be performed on October 30.

Politics in Modern Iran

Sir. — I do not for a moment deny L. P. Elwell-Sutton the right to go on defending the Shah's regime (August 28), nor do I deride his hatred of "Khomeinism", to which I have been opposed for many years. This reply is simply intended, partly to save my views from gross misrepresentation, and partly to show why the Shah's despotism cannot be excused by the use of simple rhetoric about the current madness in Iran, it only because that despotism itself was the decisive cause of this madness.

Elwell-Sutton's first complaint is that "like too many social scientists" I start off "with a preconceived model". I would merely mention that there are not one but several models in my books, and that none of them is "preconceived", or some other critics would not have failed to find any theoretical model in my hook at all.

Having thus disposed of much of my analysis (and the related evidence which is contained in the best part of 14 chapters out of 18, Elwell-Sutton then proceeds to accuse me of things I have not said, and of ignoring those which I have said. For instance: "For Katozian a failure of democracy is a contradiction in terms: it can only have been destroyed by despotic forces backed by foreign interests". This is simply untrue, and I would refer him to chapters 4 and 5 of my hook on the success and failure of the "Constitutional" Revolution, chapters 8-10, on the loss of several opportunities for establishing a democratic social framework between 1942 and 1953, and chapter 11, on the missed opportunities of the period 1960-63. For example, anticipating the enuses of the failure of the democratic movement led by Musaddiq, I write (in chapter 9, pp 164-5): "Yet the fact that the democratic forces were militarily defeated cannot be entirely explained by the tactics and strategies of their enemies; an army advancing against an enemy would hardly be surprised to meet resistance and retaliation; its success or failure depends as much on the enemy's decisions as its own; and it can never entirely blame its own failure on the fact that the enemy put up a fight. This is a simple, obvious, but very significant lesson which is yet to be understood by the Iranian public and — especially — their scientific analysts". (On this point, see further the section entitled "The Failure of the Popular Movement: A Brief Autopsy", chapter 9, pp 179-82.)

Elwell-Sutton says that "the severest indictment of Katozian's analysis... is his failure to see what the ultimate outcome of the Revolution was likely to be". This, too, is completely unfounded. For example, discussing a naive concept of Westernism (a few months before the fall of the Shah's regime, and when Khomeini was still extremely fashionable), I warned that it should "not be uncritically accepted, and — worse still — used... to promote xenophobia and pseudo-traditionalism". (See further, chapter 6, p 107, and chapter 7, p 135.) Apart from that, in chapter 9, I have discussed the role of reactionaries in bringing down Musaddiq's government in favour of the Shah, with whom they had entered an alliance; in chapter 11, discussing the 1963 uprising, I have identified Khomeini as a "conservative" religious leader (p 227); and in chapters 17 and 18, while criticizing the tactics of the democratic (religious or other) tendencies in the recent revolution, I have predicted the rise of Khomeini's pseudo-traditionalist despotism. What Elwell-Sutton may have to mind, however, is that I should have defended the Shah's despotism, corrupt and incompetent regime which, among other catastrophes, closed all political doors and blocked all channels of social communication, until it delivered the country and its people to the tender mercies of Khomeini and his "pack of wild dogs".

to the editor

Television and Literature

Sir. — Either I spoke badly or Hermione Lee did not listen well or the acoustics of St Cecilia's Hall in Edinburgh were against us both (Commentary, September 18). I do not believe that television can never be "emotionally involving". If I believed that I would not write for it. My observation in the debate on "Television and Literature" was that the habit of viewing may be limited to the habit of reading, since readers must create their own images and not have them supplied collectively. For this reason, I argued, radio is a more sympathetic medium to books than television since it is less likely to promote false expectations in its from the written word.

MICHAEL HOLROYD,
85 St Mark's Road, London, London W11.

Keeping up Greek

Sir. — Chm was certainly in the Kennedy rhyme when I chanted it first in 1920. I noticed later that it had been dropped. Presumably this was because all the passages where it is found with the allusive re-textually suspect. In any case it is more frequent as an adverb.

The word survived only as the first syllable of *clandestine*.
D. B. GREGOR,
34 Watersmeet, Northampton NN1 5SG.

Sir. — May I add my mitc to the Latin grammar controversy? In 1913 I learnt "Palam, clum, cum, ex or e". The line wouldn't have scanned without it, and in those days even as children we could recognize a regular metre.

LUCY MAIR,
19 Hallgate, Blackheath Park, London SE3 9SG.

'The Literary Review'

Sir. — Anne Smith, novelist and one time a don at Edinburgh University, was earlier this month abruptly dismissed, without a word of warning or explanation, from her post as editor of *The Literary Review*, which she founded with a sum of money representing her life savings two years ago, at a time when the publication of the TLS was suspended. Not long after your reappearance she was obliged to sell the title and ownership of the Review for the token fee of £1.

I have no practical suggestion to make regarding Dr Smith's dilemma, and am writing to you principally to express my sense of outrage on learning of the plight of an editor who has by now amply demonstrated her enterprize, discrimination and intellectual independence. It is impossible at present to predict what will be the future of *The Literary Review*, but I only hope that one will find in future issues the work of such writers as Anthony Burgess, Doris Lessing, Frederic Raphael, Angus Wilson, Malcolm Bradbury, William Trevor, Michael Schmidt and others of the team of younger, enterprising and professionally equipped critics, all of whose names have had become accustomed to seeing in the Review's contents. Surely there must still be room in Britain, despite the reputedly omnipotent recession, for a literary journal of the range and quality represented by the Edinburgh *Literary Review* under Ann Smith's editorship?

DAVID OASCOYNE,
48 Oxford Street, Northwood, Cotes, Isle of Wight PO31 8PT.

Kenneth O. Morgan would like to apologize to readers for an error in his review, published in the TLS last week, of *Michael Foot: A Portrait* by Simon Hoggart and David Leigh, in which he identified Brighton, instead of Blackpool, as the venue for the 1981 TUC Conference.

But perhaps most baffling of all is his argument that "by virtually ignoring the religious hierarchy, whom they saw as little more than incidental allies, the democratic opposition to the Shah [including *Thoua Khomeini*] made no provision for the possibility that a section of the clerics would capture the whole movement...". For, while it looks as if I am reading a résumé of several leaves out of my own book, I find myself accused of mistakes for which I have extensively criticized others.

However, since there are too many oblique references to the sins of Khomeinism and his likes I should emphasize that I have demonstrated, both in and out of my hook, my opposition to the Khomeinist-ites; and that, being fully conscious of the denaturation link between social analysis and intelligent journalism, I have not "revised" my text since September 1979, nor have I been fied from "hindsight" in any of its views or arguments. Elwell-Sutton, who wrongly accuses me of ignoring the causes of the failure of the democratic movements in Iran, is himself oblivious to the basic reasons for the rapid and total collapse of the Shah's pseudo-modernist despotism. For example, by systematically attacking the democratic opposition, including dissident intellectuals, he ignores the fact that the Shah's regime finally collapsed when the much wider educated public (most of whom had been co-opting with that regime) went on strike, in state offices, in the Oil Company, in the public media, and — finally — even in the armed forces. If I have been open and honest in my general description of some of the worst stage-managers of the Shah's regime, it is not because I have "a nice line in invective", but because I could not find a better term than "wild dogs" for describing those agents of the Shah's SAVAK who regularly raped and murdered women political prisoners (and their children), or roasted them on the taurus "monster".

Elwell-Sutton's case might have looked a little less unconvincing if he had tried to find some fault in at least one of my arguments, observations, analyses or statistical data. As it is, he has simply used my hook as a means of expressing his own rage and short views on the Iranian revolution. That may not be fair to my hook, but it is most unfair to himself as well as his readers. As for me, I stand by all the main arguments and conclusions of my book, and I would still "welcome every opinion based on scientific criticism".

HOMA KATOZIAN,
Rutherford College, The University, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NX.

Marxism and War

Sir. — Geoffrey Best ends his interesting review of Bernard Semmel's *Marxism and the Science of War* (September 18) wondering if the present-day Soviet military writers who Semmel quotes can really "mean everything they say". Their apparent inability... to see or to imagine a pluralist world instead of one divided sharply into 'socialist' and 'capitalist' social systems and their scenarios of 'decisive armed collision' between them and of the consequent 'proletarianisation', at long last, of the advanced capitalist countries' working classes — this is bosh which it would be nice to shrug off with the misanthropic contempt it deserves, were it not such exceptionally dangerous bosh.

I have not yet seen Mr Semmel's book, but, as a fairly regular reader of this kind of Soviet text, I can say that I see no grounds for supposing they don't mean what they say, if only because they wouldn't know how to "mean" anything else.

Bosh? Yes — to us who exercise and furnish our minds very differently. But plenty of people and organizations — the Moonies, the *Proletarian* RA — some of the Protestants in Northern Ireland believe in the tender mercies of Khomeini and his "pack of wild dogs".

But perhaps most baffling of all is his argument that "by virtually ignoring the religious hierarchy, whom they saw as little more than incidental allies, the democratic opposition to the Shah [including *Thoua Khomeini*] made no provision for the possibility that a section of the clerics would capture the whole movement...". For, while it looks as if I am reading a résumé of several leaves out of my own book, I find myself accused of mistakes for which I have extensively criticized others.

However, since there are too many oblique references to the sins of Khomeinism and his likes I should emphasize that I have demonstrated, both in and out of my hook, my opposition to the Khomeinist-ites; and that, being fully conscious of the denaturation link between social analysis and intelligent journalism, I have not "revised" my text since September 1979, nor have I been fied from "hindsight" in any of its views or arguments. Elwell-Sutton, who wrongly accuses me of ignoring the causes of the failure of the democratic movements in Iran, is himself oblivious to the basic reasons for the rapid and total collapse of the Shah's pseudo-modernist despotism. For example, by systematically attacking the democratic opposition, including dissident intellectuals, he ignores the fact that the Shah's regime finally collapsed when the much wider educated public (most of whom had been co-opting with that regime) went on strike, in state offices, in the Oil Company, in the public media, and — finally — even in the armed forces. If I have been open and honest in my general description of some of the worst stage-managers of the Shah's regime, it is not because I have "a nice line in invective", but because I could not find a better term than "wild dogs" for describing those agents of the Shah's SAVAK who regularly raped and murdered women political prisoners (and their children), or roasted them on the taurus "monster".

Among this week's contributors

KINGSLEY AMIS'S *Collected Poems 1944-1979* were published in 1979. His most recent novel is *Russian Hide-and-Seek*, 1980.

ALAN BELL is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. T. J. BINYON is a Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford.

ALAN BOLO's most recent collection of poems is *This Fine Day*, 1979.

ROGER BOWEN's edition of the collected poems of Bernard Spencer will be reviewed shortly in the TLS.

SIR BARNETT COCKS's books include *The European Parliament*, 1973.

PETER CONRAD's books include *Romantic Opera and Literary Form*, 1979, and *Imagining America*, 1981.

PATRICIA CRAIG's critical study, *The Lady Investigator: Women Detectives and Spies in Fiction*, a collaboration with Mary Cadogan, was published earlier this year.

NOEL CROSS is writing a book on the conditions of nineteenth-century authorship.

CAROLINE ELAM is a lecturer in the History of Art at Westfield College, London.

GAVIN EWART's collected poems, *The Collected Ewart 1933-1980*, were published last year.

KYRIE FITZLYON's books include *Before the Revolution*, 1978.

JOHN N. GREEN is Senior Lecturer in Romance Linguistics at the University of York.

JULIE KAVANAGH is Reviews Editor of *Harpers and Queen*.

JONATHAN LEAR is a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge.

PHILIP MASON's books include *Kipling: The Glass, The Shadow and The Fire*, 1975, and *The Dove in Harness*, 1976.

J. E. MORTIMER was Chairman of the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service from 1974 to 1981.

musical, in the Hugh Wheeler version, does not have a happy ending; the last words, uttered over a dead cow, are "the pix".

ROBERT CUSHMAN,
The Observer, 8 St Andrews Hill, London EC4V 5JA.

'Evangelist of Race'

Sir. — A rather nasty typographical error intruded itself into my review of Geoffrey Field's *Evangelist of Race* (September 4). I seem to be saying that his long book "tells us more about Houston Stewart Chamberlain than we want to know, though not what we ought to know." This appears to be denigrating a book of which I think very highly indeed. The sentence should read: "It tells us more about Houston Stewart Chamberlain than we want to know, though not more than we ought to know."

PETER GAY,
Yale University, Hall of Graduate Studies, New Haven, Connecticut 06521.

Henry Fielding and the 'Craftsman'

Sir. — Where Professor Donald Greene says [September 11] "In 1739 [Fielding] became editor, with James Ralph, of the *Craftsman*" he presumably means the *Champion*. The *Craftsman* was edited, throughout 1739, by Nicholas Amhurst.

SIMON VAREY,
Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, Oude-noord 6, 3513 ER Utrecht, Netherlands.

FERDINAND MOUNT's novels include *The Man Who Rode Asunder*, 1975, and *The Chape*, 1978.

RILAND OLIVER is Professor of the History of Africa at the University of London.

RICHARD OSBORNE is a regular contributor to *Gramophone*.

IRIS PARRY was Professor of German at the University of Manchester from 1963 to 1978. His recent collection of essays, *Hand to Mouth*, will shortly be reviewed in the TLS.

TOM PHILLIPS's *Hammurabi: A Treatment of a Victorian Novel* was published last year.

JOHN RAE is Head Master of Westminster School. His *The Public School Revolution: Britain's Independent Schools 1964-1979*, was published last year.

PAT ROGERS is the author of *The Angolan Visitor*, 1974, and *Henry Fielding: A Biography*, 1979.

GAMINI SALGADO is Professor of English at the University of Exeter.

SVENEY SHOEMAKER is Susan Linn Sage Professor of Philosophy at Cornell University, New York. He is the author of *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity*, 1963.

NORMAN STINE is the author of *The Eastern Front 1914 - 1917*, 1976.

THOMAS SUTCLIFFE is a producer for the BBC.

R. G. SWINBURNE is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Keele, Volume 3 of his trilogy on the philosophy of religion, *Philosophy and Reason*, will be published in December.

D. M. THOMAS's most recent novel, *The White Hotel*, was published earlier this year.

ANTHONY THWAITE's most recent collection of poems is *Victorian Voices*, 1980.

Finding words for ideas

By Jonathan Lear

ROY HARRIS:

The Language Myth

204pp. Duckworth. £18.

0 7156 1528 9

One reason why theories of language are important today is that, in an age only too conscious of the formative role played by processes of communication, they have come to be central to what Habermas called "the self-understanding of modern societies".

That is also one reason why it is important for people to understand that a great deal of impressively authoritative modern theorizing about language is founded upon a myth.

The myth in question is the subject of this book.

Like many other modern myths, it has ancient origins in the Western tradition. Like all important myths, it flatters and reflects the type of culture which sponsors it. It has many contemporary ramifications. But nowhere has it become better established, or commanded more unquestioning credence, than through the development of modern linguistics. There its rapid metamorphosis into "science", by fiat of the dominant academic figures in the subject, constitutes one of the most revealing and disturbing episodes in the intellectual history of the twentieth century.

This quotation, which constitutes the entire preface of *The Language Myth*, holds out the exciting promise that this book will provide a deconstruction of modern linguistics. The promise is exciting not merely because of the satisfaction that attends diagnosing the earnest intellectual labours of others as illegitimate, nor because it is interesting to see how

yesterday's bristling challenge can become today's entrenched orthodoxy, but because understanding how language works is, as Roy Harris says, integral to our self-understanding. Speaking and understanding a language is one of the most complex things we do. Much, if not all, of our thought we represent to ourselves and express to others in language. Our conception of how we do this will therefore profoundly affect our conception of the human mind and our conception of humans as communicating agents.

Professor Harris's attack on modern linguistics is analogous to the criticism of positivist social science made by Habermas and the Frankfurt school. Critical social theorists argue that the goal of the social sciences ought to be a type of self-knowledge – an understanding of what we are like as social beings – and that such knowledge must elude us as long as we take the natural sciences to provide the only paradigm of science or scientifically worthy knowledge. Harris begins, as do many critical social theorists, with a historical reconstruction of the origins of the discipline which reveals the contingent reasons why the founders took their study to be a science and why they construed science too narrowly.

Bertrand Russell once wrote about the word "the" that "like Browning's Grammarian with the enclitic *de* I would give the doctrine of this word if I were 'dead from the waist down' and not 'merely in prison'." (Russell was then serving time for his pacifism in the First World War). All that Russell and the Grammarian had in common was that they both worked under conditions of physical hardship. While the Grammarian, as Harris says, aimed to supply a historically minded account of the enclitic's grammatical rules, based on a study of ancient texts, Russell offered an ahistorical analysis of the deep structure of one use of the definite article. The move from a historical to an ahistorical study of

language began with the rise of positivism in the mid-nineteenth century. Max Müller, in *Lectures on the Science of Language* (1864), claimed scientific status for the study of language though it was "scarcely received as yet on a footing of equality by the older branches of learning". Ferdinand de Saussure criticized historical linguistics on the grounds that the changes in the use of a word over centuries can bear little relation to what is known by a competent speaker.

The task of linguistic science, according to Saussure, was to provide a theoretical model of a competent speaker's linguistic knowledge. Language was to be conceived not as a system of spoken or written signs, but as a cognitive structure possessed by speakers who "knew" the language.

by "internalizing" the object of analysis for linguistics in this way, Saussure achieved a remarkable feat of academic politics. He rescued his subject from the historians by finding a place for it within psychology; but at the same time safeguarded it from the possible encroachments of psychologists. He established a programme which psychology has not yet made ways of dealing with.

Anyone who can achieve such a feat has as good a claim as any to be regarded as the founder of a new discipline.

It is ironic, from Harris's perspective, that although Saussure's critique of historical linguistics was designed to make room for what an ordinary speaker knows, the construction of theoretical models ignored the speaker's view of his own competence. Had they paid attention to this, Harris claims, the founders could not have claimed linguistics to be a science.

But what is the language myth? It is, says Harris, a product of two fallacies, the "teleological fallacy" and the "determinacy fallacy". The teleological fallacy is the be-

lief that "linguistic knowledge is essentially a matter of knowing which words stand for which ideas". The determinacy fallacy holds that "all men are provided by Nature with the same ideas" and thus all that men have to do to communicate is to agree on a correlation between words and ideas.

The use of the term "fallacy" is of course rhetorical. Outside of logic, I suspect that every named fallacy – the intentional fallacy, the teleological fallacy, the naturalistic fallacy – has at least some embodiment that promotes understanding and insight. Certainly it can be useful to know an author's intentions when reading a text or to see purposive behaviour in nature: Aristotle and Nietzsche, who derived their moral theories from their conceptions of man's nature, did not commit a fallacy. At most, these "fallacies" signify a type of reasoning that is prone to abuse. The same is true of Harris's "fallacies".

A generation ago Wittgenstein pointed out that if we conceive of ideas as items that are present to the mind's eye and take words to stand for ideas, then we will have a misleading conception of the human mind and of linguistic communication. However, nothing in Wittgenstein's criticism bars a linguist from postulating mental faculties as repositories of linguistic competence, just as long as this postulation marks the beginning, not the end, of a research programme into the nature and physical embodiment of these faculties. (Unlike Lockean ideas, these mental items will not be immediately visible to the mind's eye).

It is a shame that in a work that purports to offer a critique of modern linguistics so little of contemporary research in linguistics or cognitive psychology is cited or discussed. Classics of the 1930s, 40s and 50s are discussed. Chomsky's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (1965) is criticized, but the few mentioned works of more recent vintage are often cited in support of the author's argument rather than as an example of some

important error. In particular, there is no mention of Jerry Fodor's fascinating attempt to revive the good name of ideas in linguistics and cognitive psychology. One cannot help but think that this is a serious omission, especially in the light of the claims made in the preface.

There are two significant asymmetries between Harris's critique and that offered by critical social theorists. First, positivist social science purported to offer not just a type of social knowledge, but the only legitimate social knowledge possible. A hermeneutic approach to understanding a society was considered "subjective" and therefore suspect. Critical theorists had to provide a critique of positivism in order to make room for their work. Modern linguistics does not exercise such ideological control, so there is not the same need for a polemic against an inadequate linguistic theory. Harris's case would be made most persuasively by the presentation of a new theory, not the critique of an old one.

This suggests a second asymmetry. Critical theorists are able to point to tangible examples – in the works of Marx and Freud – of what they take to be alternatives to positivist social science. In his last chapter, "Linguistics Demythologized?", Harris says little about what he thinks linguistics ought to be like. Linguistics ought to pay more attention to the context in which speech acts are made, it ought to be a "continuously creative process". It ought to "describe systematically what the speaker and hearer have to do in order to integrate speech relevantly into a temporal flow of episodes which they are jointly co-monitoring". But the suggestions, however valuable, remain programmatic, and Harris devotes the bulk of the chapter to continuing his criticisms. He does make some trenchant criticisms, but it is always possible to criticize an interesting and valuable theory: he has not shown that his criticisms amount to more than this.

By the summer of 1918, the British had altogether changed their opinion, and "the new nations" were recognized even before they existed. That this happened owed a great deal to the historian R. W. Seton-Watson, to whom this thorough, extraordinary, and, for a lover of Central Europe, irresistible book is devoted. It is a biography, by his sons, and fills in the gaps that have been left despite their (and Zagreb University's) earlier publications of their father's correspondence.

Seton-Watson had made his reputation before 1914, with his *Racial Problems in Hungary* (1907), which blew the myth of Liberal Hungary to bits, and especially with his *South Slav Question*, of 1911, which did much to weaken the Habsburg Monarchy's reputation for enlightened imperialism. Both books are still good starting-points for anyone with an interest in the area, for they worked hard, wrote well, had an eye for detail, and knew all of the languages. Throughout, Seton-Watson was moved by Gladstonian indignation: he was concerned with small nations' struggle for freedom.

It is the Gladstonian tradition that springs to mind in this biography, for, like Gladstone, Seton-Watson owed much to a Scottish tradition of rather dismal hard work, and to the rentier money made by it out of business-profits in empire-enriched England – would Orwell have written as boldly about the enlightenment of the dividend-drawer? For most of the time, Seton-Watson was free to pursue his interests without any constraints for money – at least until the war (again, rather characteristically of the Gladstonian tradition) forced him to take an academic job.

Seton-Watson left an autobiographical fragment that evokes a bleak world, almost the "Leyden Jar" in which Edmund Gosse said he grew up. His father came of stern ministry, but opted instead for business, at which he prospered (in ex-patriation to India) enough to send his son to Winchester. Seton-Watson's mother (the Seton part) was a more romantic figure, with a concern for the more colourful aspects of the

Scottish past (her father, a prominent influence in his grandson's early days, spent much time and money devising genealogies of the House of Seton, to which he was remotely connected). Her religious sympathies were with Episcopalianism, the first of the lost causes her son came in touch with. Soon, she became an invalid, and it must have been a very bleak household. Seton-Watson remembered Sundays as a long, cold hell; Saturdays were "like heavy clouds banking up, which would overcast the whole Sunday landscape". There were lengthy, dismal walks, and Seton-Watson became addicted to romantic day-dreaming – first, about the Scottish past (about which, as a very young man, he wrote some rather gushing verse) and then, through we have to guess this, about the glossy world of the Habsburgs.

But beneath the day-dreaming, a very serious brain was forming. He did well at school (though never in subjects that required a sense of the absurd) and at Oxford. He travelled to France, Germany and Italy, acquiring their languages easily enough, and in November 1905, aged twenty-six, he arrived in Vienna. Most British people who went to that part of the world fell easily enough for the cause of one or other of the historic nations; an Arthur Yolland (who died, at an advanced age, at the end of the Second World War in Budapest) or for that matter a C. A. Macartney, wrote with tremendous enthusiasm for the Hungarians, to whose charm and vigour they had succumbed. With Seton-Watson it was quite different, for soon he adopted the cause of the peoples whom he saw as oppressed: Slovaks, Croats, Romanians, Serbs and, later, Czechs, though he wrote less effectively about them.

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HUGH and CHRISTOPHER SETON-WATSON:

The Making of a New Europe

R. W. Seton-Watson and the last years of Austria-Hungary

458pp. Methuen. £25.

0 416 74730 2

MICHAEL KETTLE:

The Allies and the Russian Collapse

Volume One March 1917, March 1918

287pp. André Deutsch. £14.95.

0 233 97078 9

A Polish nobleman, talking to the German ambassador in Vienna in 1918, said "If Poland could be free, I'd give half my worldly goods; but with the other half I'd emigrate". Of how many of the new nations of middle Europe might he not have said the same? During the First World War, the British were very reluctant to say good-bye to the Habsburgs; they solved, or at least shelved, too many problems. The British, indeed, regarded separatist nationalism – the Irish example well to the fore – as a nuisance: a dreary, endless perspective of minorities within minorities, in which nothing of substance was at stake but local-government jobs. The only real ground against the Habsburgs was that they were allies of Germany; if they had made peace, the Foreign Office would gladly have helped to keep their Monarchy going. The Left was no different in its opinion: "Every subject race evolves its Sinn Féin minority", wrote the *Nation*, proceeding to write off the self-exiled spokesmen for Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia as unrepresentative dreamers with a grudge, whose planned new states were "quite artificial".

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Small states are beautiful

By Norman Stone

Seton-Watson also worked hard to smooth out differences that arose among the exiles and between them and Allied governments. It is probably here that his greatest service to Yugoslavia was done, and it was not all easy.

The Serbian government, under the control of old Pasić, did not care a rap for the Yugoslav cause. These old Serbians distrusted the Catholic Croats and Slovenes, cared mainly for Munich and Albania, and had no intention of setting up a Yugoslavia that would be a Serbian enclave. The nationalist Count Apponyi once won Slovak hearts by making a speech in their language – which he had learnt off by heart the night before, phonetically, because he could not speak a word of Slovak. Later, Seton-Watson transferred his sympathies to the Croats, and thought Zagreb a sort of southern Edinburgh. By extension, during the war, he spoke for the Rumanians and the Czechs as well.

Of course he was naïve about many things. He knew nothing much about economics, and he underrated the degree of loyalty that the Habsburgs could still inspire. In 1914, for instance, he could state that "a considerable proportion of the Austrian and Hungarian population consists of friends of the Entente", whereas at the time, and well on into the war, the Habsburgs' peoples showed, in the main, every enthusiasm for the dynasty's cause. If not for the German one, he did not really understand the Church, or the way a certain kind of a-political "social Catholicism" underpinned the Habsburg Monarchy from 1848 onwards. He shared Masaryk's perspective on Slovakia, that the Slovaks were just "slumbering Czechs", "Bohemians, in spite of using their dialect as a literary language": it was no accident that Masaryk himself was, in a way, a Lutheran Slovak, for neither he nor Seton-Watson quite appreciated the immense gap between the Czechs and the bulk of the Catholic Slovaks.

With Yugoslavia, it was much the same. Above all, Seton-Watson did not really appreciate the importance of the international dimension of it all. To make a reality of the "successor-states" that he petronized (and they included the modern Austrian Republic) it took another world war, the forced emigration of millions of people, and decades of Communist rule. What Seton-Watson offered was a last will of Gladstonian optimism.

His sons' biography does full justice to his wartime efforts. He did much to make the cause of the minority peoples respectable, and, with his journal *The New Europe* (financed partly from his own pocket) he gave their spokesmen an influential platform. He did stout service to the Yugoslav cause, especially, because he defended it against Italian imperialism. In the Spring of 1915, Italy had been given most of northern and central Dalmatia, as well as great tracts of Austrian territory to the west, as a reward for entering the war – an intervention which everyone expected to be decisive. Seton-Watson found out the terms of the secret treaty, and set up a campaign for their reversal, on the grounds that Italy had no claim, by nationality, to these Slavonic regions. At the same time, he collaborated with Masaryk in exile to gain Allied recognition for the cause of Bohemian independence.

He made many powerful enemies, which resulted in his being consigned to 1917, in circumstances which this book does something to clear up. The Italian ambassador Imperiali, seems to have worked with highly-placed English Austrophiles to have Seton-Watson silenced. But by this time the Lloyd George government was in power, and since it entertained more radical war aims, Seton-Watson was soon seconded to Intelligence, and carried on his work from there. It is curious to reflect that the Northcliffe propaganda team, of which he was a member, consisted of no more than thirteen "people", each working tirelessly to undermine Central European morale.

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Setting the scene

By John N. Green

JOHN LYONS:

Language and Linguistics

An Introduction

356pp. Cambridge University Press.

£15, (paperback, £4.50).

0 521 23034 9

Less than twenty years ago, asked to recommend a general introduction to linguistics for an eager sixth-former, first-year undergraduate or intelligent layman, one would have been perplexed to know what to suggest. Nowadays, the dilemma would be which to choose. Formerly, the selection was restricted to a handful of magisterial, end-of-career syntheses (like Leonard Bloomfield's *Language*) or compendious manuals (like Charles Hockett's *Course in Modern Linguistics*) – neither designed to nurture the first burgeonings of vocation, or to a clutch of readable but largely untrustworthy popularizations. Now, there are dozens, fragmenting the genre into collections of original articles, readers, works of reference, textbooks, course-books (with or without sets of exercises) and what, for lack of a better term, we may call "ginger-texts".

Among this spate of publications (seen by many as the outward sign of a vigorous and youthful discipline) works of reasonably comprehensive scope and enduring merit have not been numerous. In some cases, this is because they are intentionally partisan, favouring a linguistic theory whose progress renders them inescapably ephemeral, sometimes indeed leaving them outmoded before they reach the bookseller's shelves. In others, it is attributable to a distressing fashion in certain American graduate schools for the "introductory guide" to be seen as the natural

first book of any budding linguist.

But carving aside, the more linguistics grows and the more it establishes hypenated relationships with neighbouring disciplines, the harder it becomes for any individual to produce a fair prospectus for the beginner or outsider. The talents required are: the maturity and tenacity of purpose to cover developments in all sub-fields, the experience to tease out historical strands, the authority to adjudicate on conflicting claims, the erudition to perceive common principles between linguistics and adjacent subjects – all this, allied to a measure of optimism and enthusiasm. Small wonder that so few live up to these demands, or that when they do (as in Dwight Bolinger's outstanding *Aspects of Language*), it requires over six hundred densely-packed pages.

In this new book,

appearing first Hitler and then Stalin, was a disaster for them all.

We can readily admit that the British made all manner of blunders in their response to the Bolshevik revolution - underrating the Bolsheviks' strength, overrating that of the various enemies, intervening half-heartedly and then non-intervening half-heartedly. Kettle never discusses why intelligent men like Balfour and Robert Cecil misread things in this way, but his book does show how accurate was the reporting of British people on the spot. The soldiers, for instance, came out very well. In 1914 itself, Allied military representatives tended to be buffoons - General Hanbury-Williams, for instance, who could communicate with the Russians only in Indian Army French, and who had a very shaky knowledge of the local geography; or his French colleague, the Marquis de Laguiche, who refused even to have a telephone installed "because I am not a lackey to be summoned by a bell". But their juniors were very able, as by 1917 were some of the seniors as well: Generals Poole and Finlayson at Murrumbidgee, and their agents in Petrograd, reported quite firmly that the Bolsheviks ought to be recognized as a de facto government, just as Brice Lockhart was to argue from Moscow. No-one seems to have had any faith at all in the possibilities of liberal parliamentarism in Russia: there was "no reason to expect anything from the Constituent Assembly but hot air... the most amorphous parliament on earth" (which contrasts with Seton-Watson's hopeful notion that "it is with the Constituent Assembly that the best hopes for Russia's future lie"). These officers were also dismissive about the Russian Whites. The schemes for a federation of Cosaks, Ukrainians, Caucasus peoples, etc. were waved aside as nonsense.

London went ahead on its own, misreading the situation again and again. In the Spring of 1918, it neglected the very real chance that the Bolsheviks could, with encouragement, have refused to accept the German-dictated terms of Brest-Litovsk, just as, in the previous September, it had invested high

hopes in the ill-fated Kennellow Putsch. All the while, there were financial agents in the background, trying to seize control of parts of the disintegrating Russian economy while the going was good - a process that Kettle spends some time on. It is tempting to conclude that British statesmen were handling the issue with their own prejudices, and those of their prominent constituents, in mind - exactly as Lenin had said would happen, though Lloyd George himself had a closer appreciation of the reality.

Once the western Powers had decided on intervention, it made sense to turn their policy towards Central Russia, the 50,000-strong Czech legions could operate against the Bolsheviks (at this time, these people were known in London as the "Tzek-Slavs"), and the impeccably respectable exiles whom Seton-Watson supported were also resolutely anti-Bolshevik. From June 1918 onwards, one state after another recognized the would-be successors to the Habsburgs; and, when the Austro-German fronts collapsed in the autumn, it was easy enough for the peoples back home to set up national councils and proclaim their independence of the Habsburgs.

Oddly enough, Seton-Watson himself was soon overtaken by events. He thought that the atmosphere at Versailles was quite lousy. He intensely disliked the greater imperialism that the French revealed, and the lesser imperialisms of his own protégés. He wanted Austria to join with Germany, in the name of the Mazzinian principle of a Europe composed of nation-states; he was not very happy at the inclusion of so many Germans in the new Czechoslovak state; and he became more and more testy as he saw his beloved Yugoslavia sliding towards political chaos. He was a Gladstonian in a world where Gladstonian principles were ceasing to count for much. Even so, he deserves the gratitude of the states which he did so much to promote. There should, once more, be a square in large Central European towns named after him. But it would be fitting if these squares also contained a statue of Ludendorff.

Lapsed libertarians

By Kyril FitzLyon

ADAM B. ULAM:
Russia's Failed Revolutions
From the Decembrists to the Dissidents
450pp. Wiedenfeld and Nicolson.
£10.
0 297 77940 0

Adam B. Ulam has written an excellent book, sensitive and stimulating, which deserves every success. But it is, surely, not the book he had intended to write. Its title and sub-title - *Russia's Failed Revolutions: From the Decembrists to the Dissidents* - suggest a series of ill-starred revolutions occurring over a period of a century and a half; "a myriad of them", says the publisher's blurb. Yet, in Professor Ulam's own words, "Russia alone among the major European states failed to experience a mass revolt against the established order throughout the nineteenth century". Ulam, therefore, has to make do with the Decembrist insurrection of 1825 - an instantly quashed military rebellion with confused social and political aspirations - and then, after registering the "political dissent and conspiratorial activity" of the 1860s and 1870s, to pass straight on to the twentieth century with its three revolutions: one semi-failed, one failed and one successful.

The purpose of his book, Ulam says, is to answer "the question: what was it that at decisive moments has frustrated, or flawed the libertarian intentions of Russian revolutionaries and reformers?" Since the question implies an impossible single answer valid for the intentions of both these radically different species of human beings, and since the author himself does not supply it, I shall suggest my own, based on Ulam's book: their intentions were

frustrated whenever reformers behaved like revolutionaries and revolutionaries like reformers. The one common cause of failure, therefore, was the blurring of a vital distinction. Beyond that there was a multiplicity of much more fundamental reasons, different in each case. Ulam's strange assumption that the intentions of reformers and (especially) revolutionaries were always libertarian may be disregarded.

That the intentions of reformers should have been "flawed" was, of course, natural. Reformers have to deal with opposition and must, therefore, unlike revolutionaries, arrive at compromise solutions. This, together with inevitable errors of judgment, usually frustrates their plans and provides one obvious answer to Ulam's question. Of the numerous nineteenth-century reforms in Russia he, naturally enough, dwells mostly on the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, which, like many other historians, he considers to have been unsatisfactory. "The imperfect freedom", he calls it. Much of his (and the other historians') criticism of it, however, is based on a confusion of issues: the issue of personal freedom (emancipation such) and the issue of economic security, of the right to ownership of land on a scale and conditions sufficient to preserve the owner from destitution. On the first issue the reformers were not frustrated; the peasants were freed and did cease to be other men's marketable chattels. On the second issue the reformers were obliged to come to terms with the landowners' opposition. Though the principle of emancipation with land was universally recognized and implemented in actual practice, the opposition imposed a compromise at the expense of the peasants, mainly though not exclusively in the form of a reduction in the initially projected size of their allotments.

Settling on the Africans

By Geoffrey Wheatcroft

LEIDA FARRANT:
The Legendary Grogan
261pp. Hamish Hamilton. £12.50.
0 241 0592 7

The white man in Africa is a strange episode and a compelling subject. Even now when white rule has (at least ostensibly) been dismantled in Africa north of the Limpopo the story of explorers, imperialists and settlers continues to hold our attention. The psychological reasons for this are themselves interesting. We want to read about the bad guys in Africa, out of atavistic shame as much as we want to read about the good guys out of atavistic pride.

Ewart Scott Grogan was something of an explorer and something of a settler. He was born in 1874 into the purple of Victorian commerce: his father was a rich estate agent who served the Queen and was a friend of Gladstone - hence the Christian name. After Winchester he was sent down from Cambridge and subsequently left the Slade to get away from "long-haired lizards". His first visit to Africa was as a trooper, helping Rhodes put down the Matabele.

From the start he preferred Africa to the Africans: "What he saw did not endear the Matabele to him". These sentiments were only reinforced by the trek which made him famous. In 1898 he walked most of the length of Africa - not in fact "from the Cape to Cairo", the title of his first book, but north from Beira. He was disgusted by the blacks' disloyalty, dishonesty and cruelty, most of all by their taste for human flesh. All his life Grogan retained a fascination with cannibalism. Often it was the subject of jocosity. During the Great War he liked to quote a Congolese tribesman as saying that "We dislike the Indi-

ans so much that we don't even eat them". And in a speech before the Kenyan Legislative Council in 1953, during a debate on Mau Mau atrocities, he remarked of a black member of the Council, "This is the actual condition to which they revert... Even as I listen to the persistent, remorseless eloquence of my honourable friend, Mr Mathau, I have an uneasy feeling that behind his rhetoric may be his roving eye searching the front ranks opposite for a succulent morsel."

Grogan had settled in Kenya in 1903. He remembered Rhodes's words: "Give yourself to Africa. You will never regret it". For most of his life he did not regret it, perhaps because "give" was not quite the right word to describe his career. Soon after his arrival he was leasing 40,000 acres of forest and at one time he held more than 180,000 acres. From the beginning he was a leading figure in the settler community, second only to Lord Delamere. He endeared himself to the whites early on by publicly flogging three black boys who had insulted his sister.

He played some part in the ignominious British campaign against the Kaiser's army in East Africa, and a minor important part in colonial politics, where his line was simple. Kenya should have responsible government, with an "absolute democratic franchise for adult Europeans who are bona fide British subjects... [and] adequate Indian, Arab and native representation subject to the unalterable principle that political control shall remain with the Europeans".

Leida Farrant, an Italian-Kenyan, does her best to portray Grogan in an attractive light, and he clearly possessed a rough Wykehamish charm. But when allowances are made, and prochronistic or moralizing judgments are eschewed, it is hard to see him as even a benevolent paternalist. When he was a young man he wrote that "A good sound

system of compulsory labour would do more to raise the nigger in five years than will all the millions that have been sunk in missionary efforts for the last 50; but at the very sound of 'compulsory labour', the whole of the stay-at-home England... yells slavery!". His views changed little for many years.

The author is more censorious about Grogan's treatment of women. Discovering his capacity for sexual attraction in early middle age, he had several mistresses who bore him children. His legitimate children remember with hatred the effect this had on their mother. But his sex-life was not exceptional by Kenyan standards. This was the great age of the Happy Valley Set: "Are you married or do you live in Kenya?"

Grogan's end was sad. With his faculties mostly gone and the Kenya he had known changing beyond recognition, he finally left for South Africa where he died in 1967. Had he lived to celebrate his centenary he might have been surprised. Grogan once declared that "I am one hundred per cent pro African". So, intermittently, in his last years, he tried to be. He was sometimes called the "Mzee", the old man; and the name of the other Mzee, Jomo Kenyatta, might have met with his approval. (One fears that Grogan, who was relentlessly hostile to the Asians in East Africa, might have commended Amiri's regime.)

It may seem far-fetched to say that there is still a role for the huts in Kenya in Africa. But nothing is predictable in that continent, which teaches tough lessons. The other morning a white farmer from the eastern highlands of Zimbabwe was being interviewed on the radio, talking about the record tobacco harvest and about the state of the country. He had fought hard and had suffered in the bush war - his wife had been killed by terrorists/guerrillas/freedom fighters. Now, he said, Zimbabwe had a great future, as long as "a man like Mugabe" was in power. Grogan might just have understood.

a moment, into "the freest country in the world" (Lenin's verdict, quoted by Ulam, and also Mikoyan's four decades later, not quoted by Ulam). The short answer to Ulam's question is: "Lenin's victory". But why was he able to achieve it? Because, says Ulam in effect, the "February" revolutionaries believed as if they were reformers. There was the same desire to compromise, the same hesitancy, the same unwillingness to believe in danger from the left. At the critical moment, when the Provisional government asked for the cooperation of the non-Bolshevik socialists, it was refused, since, as their leader somewhat cynically admitted many years later, it would then have been discovered that their remedies and promises were bogus: "were we to enter the government we would arouse among the masses the kind of hopes and expectations which in fact we would not be able to fulfil". Better to stay out and jeer. Why did they first set out to overthrow tsarism and then make life impossible for the first Provisional government? The question is purely rhetorical. The reader is left as bewildered as the author.

One word of complaint: the book has no bibliography and, worse still, the titles of source works are given in translation only.

The Legal Status of the Land Berit by Ernst R. Zivier, translated by Paul S. Ulrich (379pp. Berlin Verlag. £8.96) is "A Survey after the Quadrupartite Agreement". Among the chapters in the section entitled "Historical Survey" are "The Administrative Partition of Berlin", "Development in the Divided City", "Four Powers and Inner German Negotiations". Other sections are "The Berlin Status as a Legal Problem" and "The Quadrupartite Agreement". The book also reproduces relevant documents and maps.

The empire of the Mwenemutapas

By Roland Oliver

DAVID BEACH:
The Shona and Zimbabwe 900-1850
480pp. Heinemann. £12.50.
0 435 94505 X

Long before the emergence of the state which now bears its name, Zimbabwe was known to the world as the most considerable stone-built monument of Black Africa, the most promising exception to the proposition that Africans had developed no civilization worthy of the name. Tourists calling there on their way to the Victoria Falls found a charming valley, with a snug hotel and a circle of chalets surrounded by well-kept grass and great park-like mopani trees, and in the background the graceful girdle-wall of the "Elliptical Temple", reminiscent at a distance of some castle of the Welsh or Scottish marches. Even after the scramble for the walled terraces and platforms woven crazily around the boulder-strewn hill-top of the so-called Acropolis, foreign visitors would almost invariably end their tour by asking if these ruins were really African, and the keepers would reply politely that they were forbidden to express any opinion on that subject.

All this went on for seventy years and more after 1905, when Randall Maclver, a young British Egyptologist summoned by the Rhodes Trustees to investigate what was assumed to be a story of King Solomon's mines, at once grasped and published the essential point about this and all the other stone ruins of the Rhodesian plateau: that the walls were never those of actual dwellings, hillside terraces or free-standing enclosures. The associated dwellings had stood on the terraces or within the enclosures, and they had been in every case the circular houses of Africa.

It is, properly speaking, the huts which constitute the really essential part of the ruin... The stone wall which the visitor so much admires is only the skin, the huts are the flesh and bone. These dwellings, found everywhere within the stone enclosures, and inseparable from them, are unquestionably African in every detail, and belong to a period which is fixed by foreign imports as in general mediaeval.

Maclver pointed out that, if his archaeological diagnosis was correct, then there must be a close connection between the visitor so much admires and the indigenous African "empire", ruled by a king bearing the title of Mwenemutapa, with which the Portuguese had been in contact from their coastal bases at Sofala and Mozambique from the early sixteenth century on. True, the capital of the Mwenemutapas was at the northern edge of the plateau overlooking the Zambezi valley, and outside the area of granite-topped hills which yielded the stone for building, whereas the site of Great Zimbabwe was 350 miles further south where the highlands began to drop away towards the Limpopo. But perhaps there had been a change in the centre of power during the sixteenth century which had not interrupted a basic continuity of institutions.

The Mwenemutapas, as described by the Portuguese, were sacred kings of a type fairly widely spread in pre-colonial Africa. Though apparently despotic, their power was in fact only as strong as the number of their armed followers. They lived a highly ritual existence, surrounded by the courts of their queen mothers and those of their nine "great wives", and by their hundreds of other palace women and young male servants. At great festivals they communed with the spirits of their ancestors through the persons of estate mediums. Each year they killed sacred fire and distributed burning brands to their political subordinates. Their palace grew up into war-towers and spent their maturity as administrative officials. Beyond the range of direct administration there was a wide circle of tributary states, the size and regularity of

the tribute depending on the accessibility of the Mwenemutapas's armies. Such, in outline, must have been the type of polity of which Great Zimbabwe was once the capital, and given the scale and splendour of the installations, it must have been one of the largest and richest kingdoms of its kind. Its wealth and power must, in part, have derived from its control of the sources of gold and ivory, which were the richest items in the coastal trade of the Indian Ocean from about the tenth century onwards.

Considering how early these essential conclusions were reached, it is surprising how long it has taken for knowledge to build up to the point at which a general history of the people of Zimbabwe could be attempted. The archaeological approach was renewed with the classic excavations of Gertrude Caton-Thompson at Zimbabwe in 1929, which amply confirmed Maclver's findings. But it was not until the appointment of Roger Summers and Keith Robinson as resident archaeologists at the National Museum and the Historical Monuments Commission in the 1950s that the general sequence of Early and Later Iron Age development could be worked out, and the many lesser ruin sites assigned to their places in that sequence.

It is nowadays generally accepted that the use of dry-stone walling for the penning of small stock began in the south-western part of the country in Early Iron Age times, but was greatly developed following the appearance in this area of Later Iron Age immigrants with strong interests in cattle pastoralism and gold-mining. This culture spread gradually to the southern part of the central plateau, where the earliest phase of the Later Iron Age occupation at Great Zimbabwe probably occurred in the eleventh century. By the thirteenth century, if not before, the culture of Great Zimbabwe had become dominant, and lesser sites of the same general type had begun to be built on the north-eastern side of the plateau and even far away in the coastal lowlands. Great Zimbabwe reached the peak of its prosperity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. By the sixteenth century it had ceased to be a place of any importance, and subsequently the luxury imports went to other stone-built sites, including a new series in the south-west headed by those at Khami and Dlodzho.

The archaeological situation, as it was understood in the early 1970s, has been admirably summarized by Peter Garlake in his book *Great Zimbabwe*. David Beach's skills are different. He is a Zimbabwean, a fluent Shona speaker, a student of Portuguese documentary evidence, and of Shona oral traditions. He has read and pondered the archaeological literature, and has sought to interpret it in the light of ethnohistorical evidence. He has come closer than anyone else to bridging the gap between the archaeological and the documentary evidence, while leaving some major problems still unsolved, and offering a good many hostages to fortune.

For a start, Beach identifies the Shona with the later Iron Age pastoralists who infiltrated the Zimbabwe plateau from the dry lands of the south-west some time around the beginning of the present millennium. This is to say, he postulates an immigration of such overwhelming proportions that the Early Iron Age population was totally absorbed by the newcomers, losing not only its material culture but even its language. At such a late stage of prehistory, this is almost inconceivable. A vast increase in cattle-raising seems to have been a general feature of the two or three centuries around the beginning of the millennium in all the parts of eastern and southern Africa that were ecologically suited to it. This was certainly a development of the greatest historical importance, not so much for the growth in human population as for the increase in property in the form

of herds, and in the progressive stratification of society that usually resulted from it. The most fruitful analogy with Zimbabwe would seem to be that of Rwanda. Here, as in Zimbabwe, specialized herdsmen appeared with their herds on the arid peripheries, of better-watered agricultural terrain. At first they led a largely separate existence. Later, with the increase of their cattle, they started to infiltrate the neighbouring agricultural societies. The rich, cattle-owning lineages became the key groups in a new social configuration, which developed through perhaps five or six centuries into one of the largest and most stratified kingdoms in Bantu Africa. It was probably much the same in Zimbabwe. By postulating more Chiefs than Indians at the outset of his story, Beach has deprived himself of the best possible explanation of an aristocratic living in large, prestigious compounds, sometimes enclosed within stone walls.

Beach is not silent about the pastoral revolution, but he certainly does not accord it the first place among the causes of economic differentiation and state formation. Basically, he thinks that states were formed in order to deal with the export trade in gold, and control of trade routes was more important than control of production. He thinks that Great Zimbabwe, which lay outside the gold-producing area, achieved its pre-eminence by organizing and policing the trade routes between the mining areas and the Indian Ocean port of Sofala. "The Zimbabwe state rose by exerting military strength to benefit from the exertions of others" - specifically, the gold-miners of the south-west. It is difficult to see why that of Butua should have been different, but at all events it would seem that the Khami period in the south-west was contemporary with the efflorescence of the Mutapa state in the north-east.

The final stage of political development in Beach's story covers the eighteenth century, when the Mutapa dynasty had retreated from the north-eastern plateau into the Zambezi valley, and when a new dynasty, whose monarchs bore the title Chingamire, ruled the whole of the plateau from a capital at Dlodzho. A Chingamire had made his first appearance in Portuguese records as early as the 1490s, when the title belonged to a Mutapa chief in charge of the royal herds on the central plateau. It re-emerged two centuries later as that of an overnight subject who, in a burst of conquest, drove the current Mwenemutapa from the highland corner of his

dominions into the valley below, and gained control of the Khami-based kingdom. Once again, the connection between military power, political overlordship and the monopolization of cattle by a privileged minority is quite clear.

The Chingamires rose to prominence through the effectiveness of their organized bands of pastoral warriors, known as Rozvi, who were capable of moving swiftly over long distances and delivering deadly raids against political or fiscal offenders. In the centre of the kingdom, towards the south-west of the plateau, the Rozvi lived as an élite of foreign conquerors in villages separate from those of the earlier rulers and of the ordinary Shona agriculturalists, and these were the only villages where cattle were kept. The gold mines were by this time almost worked out and few luxury imports found their way to the capital town, where the population was only a fraction of that of the Great Zimbabwe of late mediaeval times. But the tradition persisted of building stone walls around the dwellings of the rulers, and the ground plan of Dlodzho has no mysteries for those who know the older sites. It was the Zimbabwe civilization in decline; soon, it was to suffer a series of invasions from the south, first by blacks and then by whites.

It is good that the modern Zimbabwe state in the year of its independence should have found a historian like Beach, who is familiar not only with the archaeology and the documents but also with the family history of so many Shona lineages. It is a pity that this does not make for easy reading by the non-specialist, who must be baffled by the sheer number of lineages and names. It is also a pity that the history of the Shona people, which does have a certain overall unity, has been balkanized into a series of regional chapters. It is synthetic of what is wrong with the book as a whole that seven of the ten maps contain so much detail as to be unreadable by the naked eye. Perhaps Beach will one day attempt a new version designed for the general reader. In the meantime, he has taken the history of Zimbabwe a long way forward.

The Europeans in the Shona 1834-78 (250pp. Charendon Press: Oxford University Press. £15. 0 19 822718 3), edited by Paul Sami and Richard Hill, is a selection of writings by traders, civil servants and missionaries. They include a Saint-Simonian's journal of an expedition to collect live animals, an account of ivory-hunting on the White Nile, and letters from a gold prospector in Dar Berti.

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Stripping the mask

By Roger Bowen

G. S. FRASER

A Short History of English Poetry
386pp. Shepton Mallet: Open Books
Publishing, £12. (paperback, £5.95)
0 7291 0077 4

IAN FLETCHER and JOHN LUCAS
(Editors)

Poems of G. S. Fraser
206pp. Leicester University Press
£7.50
0 7185 1214 6

"Poetry is my gift. But to earn a living I became a first literary journalist, then a university teacher, and now teaching, especially the teaching of poetry, has become my true vocation as writing." The posthumous appearance of *Poems of G. S. Fraser* and *A Short History of English Poetry* provides an opportunity to assess both the poet's gift and the vocation of the critic-teacher; however, while the poems describe a lifetime of successful creative activity, this final work of literary history and criticism is not the best index of Fraser's substantial talents. His lasting strengths as a critic are readily exemplified in the range and sympathy of *The Modern Writer and his World*, the trenchant essays on modern poetry which comprise *Vision and Rhetoric*, and the pioneering study of Lawrence Durrell. If this were not enough there would be the editions of Keith Douglas's poetry and prose; the important anthologies, *Springtime* (1953), with Ian Fletcher, and *Poetry Now* (1956); *New Poetry* on the Third; his poetry reviews for *TLS* and the *New Statesman*, and the generosity afforded young poets at his Bonifort Street salon in the 1950s. His contribution to post-war letters is inestimable.

In their introduction to *Poems of G. S. Fraser*, Ian Fletcher and John Lucas judge correctly that "about his criticism there tends always to be something of the sense of an audience." The problem with *A Short History* is that there seems to be no certain grasp of a potential readership; perhaps the audience for a book of this kind is getting harder to determine. Nonetheless, Fraser does make an obvious effort to give the endeavour his own stamp: "The purpose of a primer of English poetry like this is to give readers the flavour, the first impact of poets, such as one felt oneself on one's first reading of them, not to provide a catalogue of dates and titles." Jaunty anecdote and extensive quotation have their enlivening part to play in this record of a lifetime's relationship with poetry, of hours in a library and in a classroom. Unfortunately, biographical, social and philosophical information is layered unevenly, and so the historical backbone does suffer some curvature; if a "catalogue" has been eschewed, no consistent alternative has been found. The prevailing value of the survey is the exactness of Fraser's personal focus - Keats is an "inverted sensualist" who "shows more delight in anticipation and memory than the brief benefit of a bewildering minute" - and his firm, yet undogmatic treatment of reputations.

The final chapter on the twentieth century is the most engaging in its evaluations though often choppy in organization and chronology. There is no general agreement about modern poetry, Fraser says, and proceeds gamely from there. He is refreshingly unmetaphorical in his allocation of space to the Anglo-Irish, Anglo-Scots, and Welsh traditions. Yeats, acknowledged influence on his work, receives full attention as "a greater poet than Eliot or Hardy," but he has time also for F. R. Higgins, "whose death in his middle forties was a great loss to Irish poetry." In modern Scottish letters, Muir and MacDiarmid provide Fraser with a clear contrast. Muir represented the passion of the fanatic. "Yet he must recognize a superiority where a preference may not be felt: the narrow, bitter, half-

educated man is in the end the greater poet."

In a final section entitled "Prospects for Poetry Today," he brings the book full circle by quoting from Andrew Motion's "Past Midnight," a poem which, he feels, unites us with our beginnings in Anglo-Saxon verse: "a poetry of mood, the sense of the discouraging weather of the heart controlled." But of "prospects" nothing is really said; this history does not end with a flourish. In an early reference to poets writing after a great epoch end, accordingly, reflecting neglect, he cites the overshadowing of the post-war period by the Modernist movement and the Auden generation, and speculates: "Not that, of course, in our growingly less literate world, we have any guarantee that a great age will succeed the age of Larkin, Davies, Gunn, and Hughes, or that people will go on reading or writing poetry at all." And elsewhere he suggests that "English poetry has not come to an end, but has become a comparatively minor part of poetry in English." There is a tantalizing sense of loss here, and elegy is certainly a key to Fraser's sensibility. It finds full expression in his poetry.

Fraser's poems began to appear in print at the point of cultural transition he alludes to above. His wartime pamphlet, *The First Landscape* (1943) grew to a full volume, *Home Town Elegy*, a year later, and *The Traveller Has Regrets* (1948) completed his most productive decade. In the preface to *Leaves Without a Tree*, published in Japan in 1953, which reprints *Traveller* and adds a handful of new poems, he looks upon his contribution as "typical of young poets writing just before, during, and after the war," showing a response to contemporary crisis, the impact of foreign places, and the theme of exile and loneliness. He outlines too the literary influences upon his own work: Yeats, pre-eminently, a poet he memorializes as "the last of my 'certain' men," whose pervasive music he never chose to betray; translation and the European

tradition filtered through Eliot and Pound; a concern for exact visual description learned from the *New Verse* poets; and the use of conversational diction, derived from a tradition running from Pope to Auden. His brief association with the New Apocalypse movement - "we were pleased to be anthologized but too naive to realize the disadvantages of being given a label" - is difficult to recognize in the early work; no one poem can illustrate the missionary enthusiasms of his introductory essay to *The White Horseman* (1941).

His best poems, asserts Fraser, have been "responses to particular scenes and situations... of a partly reflective, partly descriptive kind." War and the enforced exile of the soldier was an important stimulus. "The Traveller has Regrets" records his departure from Freetown, en route to Egypt via the Cape, evoking mood through one melancholy sentence measured out in phrases of musical precision:

Night with its army staid
Can warn travellers
There's only time to kill
And nothing much to say.

Robin Skelton includes this poem in his anthology, *Poetry of the Forties*, and uses its title as a section heading. It indeed encapsulates an experience of that decade. But the exile Fraser sailed toward was not simply from the "slaty weather" of his homeland, but was, as Maurice Lindsay has said, "from the hard edges of youth." As so many of his poems from the Middle East suggest, the literal fact of exile and expatriation took on increasingly metaphorical significance. He faces this squarely in "Exile's Letter": "But all that I am sure of is the exile's way is history." Life's passages, newly embarked upon, separate the traveller from his earlier selves; the "simple heart, bred in provincial tenderness" is made to feel the weakening of connection with past identities. Fraser's sensitivity to this produced some powerful memorial poems; though loss is recorded, something else is preserved. "Abs-

ence of the Dead", written in 1947 on the death of Nora, Bernard Spencer's first wife, is an outstanding example:

In the corner where she sat,
Nursing her long heel,
With her insistent hat,
Ours and the sun now dance.

Grief is as vain as rage.
Certain acquaintances please
And certain donors clasp.
Quietly, and with no clatter,
Time, that can discompose
Material certainties,
Has discomposed this image.

The poem combines a moving personal tribute with an intellectual exploration of time and matter, being and non-being; all without a whiff of presumption or pretension. The unhappy sequel to this poem, "For Bernard Spencer", published in *TLS* in 1963, is not included in the present volume.

The emergence of the literary journalist in the post-war years, and later of the academic - Fraser taught at Leicester from 1959 to 1979 - certainly reduced the poet's output. *Conditions* (1969) was his last published volume, and its poems monitor cynicism and middle age with a disarming self-awareness. "The Inane Philosophers" is boisterous fun, while "To Tilly, Sick with Love", with its refrain, "People don't give such parties now", conveys an overwhelming tenderness. The main achievement from these years is "Barrington in 1798", a narrative poem based on an eighteenth-century memoir "as racy as Smollett". It is a displaced elegy, with an evocation of life, time, and place that is gritty and authentic, end it anticipates the remarkable late flowering which the editors stress in their Introduction.

Fraser's poems from the 1970s are, indeed, consistently impressive: delectable epistles to his daughter, Katie, and his wife, Paddy; a poem for George Barker, called "Flash Harry"; and a lament for Auden. There is a sense of ending, an intimation of departure, but these are

verged in them. But their very isolation permits a degree of imaginative freedom. As Touchstone might have said, secondary worlds are very well in respect that they are private, very vile. The ambivalence of Jonson's attitude to retreat from society is part of a larger current of seventeenth-century feeling recently explored by Janelle Dillan in *Shakespeare and the Solitary Man*. In illustrating it Leggatt sometimes overplays his hand, as when he says that Sejanus "vanishes as though he had never been real at all; and in a sense he never was". Surely the brutal reality of Sejanus and his reputation as Macro are our dominant impressions at the close of the tragedy? But the author demonstrates very well one of the senses in which Jonson was a realist - that of being firmly committed to the actualities of the quotidian world in which we live, work and/or cheat and die.

There is no record of Jonson's having kicked a stone to affirm the reality of the world "out there". But if we are to take him at his word, he spent whole nights staring at his big toe, imagining urines bubbling around it. The anecdote puts us in touch with another aspect of Jonson, that which delighted in fantasy whether in man, metaphor or masked. Even when ostensibly portraying a contemporary institution as familiar to his audience as to himself, he was never content to be a "realist" merely in the sense of portraying the surfaces of actuality.

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One of the things that happen, inevitably, is that we lose any sense of Jonson's development in time. But this is not as crucial a loss as it sounds unless you happen to believe that an artist gets consistently better and better (or worse and worse). More seriously, we also often lose the sense of the individuality and wholeness of a particular work as it is looked at from different angles and in different contexts. This is much more the case with the plays and masques than with the poetry and critical writings. Finally, repetition is perhaps more of an occupational hazard with this kind of "thematic" criticism than with the chronological plot; long before we reach the end of the book we have indelibly impressed on our minds Jonson's equation of the good poet with the good man, his contempt for the unfit audience, the conflict between the creative artist and the didactic moralist and so forth.

If the positive virtues of the book far outweigh these disadvantages, it is not because of any inherent merit in the chosen method, but rather because of the sensitive understanding of the texts which Leggatt displays in applying it. If unity is the object, tension is his theme. The chapter entitled "False Creations" shows this tension between the moral criticism of the false worlds created by various "artist-characters" (Tiberius, Subtle, Morose, certain figures in the masques) and Jonson's evident artistic delight in creating them. These secondary worlds are enclosed and isolated and true nature, is par-

has been compared to the sound of a prisoner hammering incessantly on the walls of his cell. The novice-monk escapes from his cell for just a few days; he tries to reach his native Caucasus, but finds instead that he wanders in a circle back to the monastery. His account of what his glimpse of freedom was like forms the poem's substance: a torrent of lyrical excess, which this English version admirably conveys.

In the verse novella, *Talk about the Last Poet*, Johnston is still a kind of translator, since he sometimes follows Paulinus' autobiography closely, but he also creates an original and moving meditation. Paulinus begins how he has fallen, or rather declined - the changes are not as violent as history imagines - into poetical poverty, provides an ideal voice for the British diplomat and poet. The bourgeois, slightly prosy tone of the loose blank verse catches the twilight of glory, Roman or British. The conclusion is memorable:

But now, whatever fate waits me,
the hope of seeing Christ enable me,
and when I leave my mortal body, may I
in whatever form be part of the body of Christ.

Andrew Motion has been appointed editor of *Poetry Review*, founded in 1909 by the Poetry Society. He succeeds Roger Garfitt. Andrew Motion has received a Gregory Award and the Cholmondeley Award, and won the Arvon/Observer poetry competition this year. He has published his first *asire* *Steamers* (1978), his first collection of poems, and *The Poetry of Edward Thomas* (1981), a critical study. He hopes to develop *Poetry Review* so as to cover biography, criticism and fiction.

The English translator is trapped between an unnatural - in our language - metrical scheme and Pushkin's classical sobriety, which allows little or no scope for liberties. Neither of these constraints is present in Lermontov's *The Novice*. Unusual in Russian, there is an absence of feminine rhyme; Turgenev, introducing his French translation, observed that "this form, by its very monolony, lends the poem a special energy. It

is a monastery, to find inner and outer freedom. It is difficult to find even the marginal thematic coherence that Johnston suggests; and the occasional verses which do have a post-imperial theme seem out of place beside a masterpiece like *The Bronze Horseman*, and probably should have been excluded. The collection does, though have coherence of a different kind: not of theme but of craftsmanship. The three long poems bear the imprint of Johnston's imaginative tact and assured technique.

His version of *The Bronze Horseman* is much closer to Pushkin and to poetry than those of earlier translators. He stays close to the literal meaning, yet handles the problem of feminine rhyme very skillfully. For example, the literal translation of Pushkin's invocation to his city runs: "I love you, city of Peter's creation, I love your stern, harmonious aspect, the majestic flow of the Neva, her granite banks, the iron tracery of your railings, the transparent twilight and the moonless gleam of your pensile nights..." Johnston translates the tetrameters thus:

I love you, Peter's own creation,
I love your stern, your stately air,
Neva's majestic pulse, her granite
banks, the iron tracery of your
railings with their iron shimmer,
your pensile nights in the half-gloom,
translucent twilight, moonless
glimmer...

This strikes me as truer than Oliver Elton's over-elaborate version - "I love thee, city of Peter's making/love thee, harmonious austere/And Neva's sovran waters breaking/Along her banks of granite sheer/Thy tracery of iron gates, thy sparkling/Yet moonless, mediative gloom/And thy transparent twilight darkling

ALEXANDER LEGGATT:
Ben Jonson
His Vision and His Art
300pp. Methuen, £16.
0 416 74660 8

More than sixty years have passed since Eliot pinpointed Jonson's reputation:

To be universally accepted; to be damned by the praise that quenches all desire to read the books; to be afflicted by the imputation of the virtues which excite the least pleasure; and to be read only by historians and antiquaries - this is the most perfect conspiracy of approval.

No mention is made of Jonson's possible appeal on the stage, though Eliot touches on the topic with his usual shrewdness towards the end of his essay:

Of all the dramatists of his time, Jonson is probably the one whom the present age would find the most sympathetic. There is a brutality, a lack of sentiment, a polished surface, a handling of large bold designs in brilliant colours, which ought to attract about three thousand people in London and elsewhere.

Eliot's "present age" is not of course ours, but there are signs that after a period of darkness Jonson is beginning to take his rightful place in the English repertoire. *Volpone* and *The Alchemist* have never been absent from the theatre for long, but *Burton* alone *Fair* has received at least two professional productions in recent years, and both *The Devil is an Ass* (adapted) and *The Silent Woman* have been professionally staged, while a musical based on *Eastward Ho*, which Jonson co-authored, is currently on in London. Alexander Leggatt's study refers occasionally to productions of Jonson's plays on both sides of the Atlantic but its main thrust is not towards a consideration of Jonson the dramatist alone. Taking its cue from Eliot's essay, it argues for the essential unity of Jonson's work in a variety of forms - tragedy, comedy, masque, lyric, satire, epigram and formal and informal critical discourse. All these separately have received critical attention in recent years, especially from transatlantic critics. But, the author writes, "I want to see what happens when we put Jonson's writings together, tracing threads that run through the various forms he worked in."

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Facts and ideals

By Gámini Salgado

either "educating by praising" the great (Jonson's own intermittent defence), or as building onto the masque (presumably in disguised form) his criticism of its patrons and participants. When does the eloquently praising tongue cease to be a teacher and become merely a hoast-ticker? And what are the ethics of pretending to flatter those you are secretly scolding? Philip Edwards sums up the issue well:

The question is not 'Did Jonson flatter?' because he certainly did, for years on end. Nor is the question, quite, 'Does it matter if he did?' The question is of understanding his works of flattery (chiefly the masques) and his works of non-flattery (chiefly his satires), of understanding each in the light of the knowledge that he wrote the other.

The author of the present study makes a brave and stimulating effort to arrive at that understanding, but in my view, does not quite succeed.

The two concluding chapters of the book are concerned with rather different aspects of the tension between ideal and actual - "The Poet as Character" explores the many roles which Jonson fashioned for himself as a judge-figure in his works. Like most great poets, Jonson made his finest poetry out of the quarrel with himself (the quarrel with Hugo Jones helped, but only incidentally). The gap between his awareness of the need to be the honest and outspoken poet, his misgivings about his own capacity, his equivocal acceptance of great men's patronage and his intermittent doubts about the worthiness of his audience all helped to define the various images of himself that appear in his work - the poet as fighter, as worthy craftsman, as *bon vivant* and many others. "It is tempting," Leggatt writes, "to call him the most fully human figure Jonson the writer

All this is true and important and the author illustrates it with force and clarity. My most serious misgivings are not connected, however, with the last of the three chapters which form this group, entitled "Judgment and Transformation". This deals with the two principal ideal worlds erected by Jonson, the world of the Epigrams and that of the masques. Both worlds raise crucial questions about what Philip Edwards in *Threshold of a Nation* called the ethics of flattery. Leggatt's view of the fulsome praise of great men is remotely connected to a primitive folk ritual of finding the true name is just about acceptable. Some of the poems do have the sort of structure in which the sense is exhausted in a kind of climactic identification with a surname - Pembroke, Wroth or whoever. Perhaps there is an element of special pleading here, since there is, after all, no particular apologetic or "meaning" in Bedford or Pembroke. But it is nothing to the special pleading involved in the account here offered of the masques. After the pioneering work of D. J. Gordon and the later studies of Stephen Orgel, Roy Strong and others, we are now perhaps more capable of appreciating the Jacobean masque than at any time between Jonson's and our own. Leggatt is particularly good at demonstrating tensions within the masque itself, as when he tells us that "It may not be altogether mischievous to say that the argument of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* is that virtue and pleasure cannot finally be reconciled." But his view of court masque as the appropriate form for combining respect for ideals with respect for facts surely raises more questions than it answers.

What, given this assumption, can be made of *Hymenae*, a masque for "the auspicious celebrating of the marriage union" between two teenagers who parted before their politically motivated marriage was even consummated? The more one contemplates the actual circumstances surrounding masque performance, the harder it is to accept Leggatt's view of "transformation" and "judgment" in masque as the paradigm of Jonson's dramatic vision and structure generally. The man who exorcised luxury in *Calline* and praised Sir Robert Wroth for staying away from masquing ("the short braveries of the night") is the same man who turned his hand to the most splendid and extravagant of such affairs, the pleasure of a scheming court and an egotistical monarch. He was also the same man who did not hesitate to show contempt for the unworthy rabble who hissed his plays, even as he wooed it. These contradictions may be reconcilable, but not with the facility demonstrated here.

Leggatt has many perceptive comments to make on individual moments in the masques, and he does distinguish between one masque and another instead of offering a blanket defence of the genre as a whole. But he still strikes me as insufficiently aware of the perils involved in defending Jonson the masque writer as

ever created", adding that it would be just to yield to the temptation provided one remembers that what is involved is the artistic creation of a public persona, not a simple autobiographical soul-baring. "Ben Jonson, his best piece of poetic may not have been the son but the father, 'art' and its 'Context', the final chapter, looks at the ways in which Jonson attempts to control the audience's response to his work and make that response a part of the play-world, as it naturally is in masque. It reminds us, if we still need reminding, how self-conscious in the best sense the theatrical art of Jonson (and Shakespeare in a wholly different way) was.

The book almost succeeds in its avowed aim of presenting the unity of Jonson's work to us, though Jonson himself would have relished the fact that this unity is compounded of a vast and all but intractable diversity. Leggatt's book brings before us a Jonson who is richly creative, with his slure of contradictions, passionately social man and writer whose greatest misfortune has been to be taken over the head through the centuries for not being Shakespeare - an altogether more credible author of the poems, plays and criticism than the cheerless figure that was handed down by Edmund Wilson.

Shakespeare's First Playhouse by Irwin Smith (63pp. The Liffey Press, 42 Weston Road, Dublin 14. Paperback IR£6 or \$12), a monograph published in a limited edition of 510, reprints the twenty-one year history of England's first playhouse, which was built by James Burbage, a joiner and actor. Copies of the monograph may be ordered direct from the publishers, or from Martha O'Brien, Peachcroft Road, Bernardsville, NJ 07944 U.S.A.

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The unprejudiced eye

By Idris Parry

W. D. ROBSON-SCOTT:

The Younger Goethe and the Visual Arts
175pp. Cambridge University Press.
£19.50.
0 521 23321 6

JOHN GAGE (Editor and Translator):

Goethe on Art
251pp. Scolar Press. £10. (paperback, £9.95).
0 85967 4940

These books might have been designed to go together. Professor Robson-Scott describes Goethe's various contacts with the visual arts until his return from Italy in 1788; the book is short and intense, always interesting, but quotations from Goethe's writings on art are necessarily brief. So the reader without German will be pleased to find many of the essays and observations mentioned by Robson-Scott given in more extended form by John Gage. His book takes us further, to the last years of Goethe's life, but by 1788 we know enough about Goethe's mind to carry us into these later years and later essays.

Goethe was so complicit as painter and draughtsman, and so interested, that for a time he was uncertain whether his future lay in poetry or in painting. This hesitation was not resolved until 1788, which provides Robson-Scott with his concluding date. "The best thing about me is my drawing," Goethe said in 1774. In Darmstadt in 1772 his friends thought him more as a painter than a poet. "He thinks of becoming a painter, and we strongly advised him to do so," wrote Karoline Flachsland at this time to her future husband, Herder. This was the year when Goethe wrote his famous essay on Strasbourg Cathedral, a superbly original work comprehended entirely by a particular view of visual art. In the following year it became Goethe's first prose publication, apart from reviews. It can be read in full in Gage's book.

Although Goethe abandoned the idea of establishing himself as a professional painter, he continued to draw and paint and write about art. His last-known sketch dates from only two months before his death in 1832. There is no rejection in his life, only transformation. He once said that you can't get rid of something that really belongs to you, even if you throw it away. Least of all could he get rid of his talent, in poetry, in science, as well as in art, for simply observing the object without prejudice.

Robson-Scott brings out clearly the integration in Goethe's experience of art and nature, art and poetry, art and the future preoccupation with science. Everybody who knows Goethe is familiar with his claim that "the eye was above all others the organ with which I apprehended the world". Robson-Scott takes us in detail through this mode of apprehension as it concerns pictures and painters and architecture, starting from the engravings of Roman vistas on the walls of his childhood home in Frankfurt and ending with the impact of classical art in Italy in the two years prior to 1788. This was by no means his first contact with classical art. Of the many influences in the years preceding the Italian journey, perhaps the most important was that of his drawing master at Leipzig, Adam Friedrich Oeser, friend of Winckelmann and the person who, according to Goethe, "taught me that the ideal of beauty is simplicity and serenity".

These words, and others like them, written when Goethe was twenty, sound strange coming from a man on the verge of *Strauss und Drogen* extravaganzas, but this young writer is so incredibly balanced that even his romantic period is mainly memorable for the way it emphasizes neo-classical virtues. Much later (in the *Wanderjahre*) he was to remark that the imagination is "a vague, unstable faculty". There speaks the scientist. This man (one gets tired of trying to divide him into artist, poet, scientist, when the phenomenon is indivisible) is simply looking for truth to nature, consequently, in the visual arts, he looks for truth in nature. And this, he believes, can be found and presented only through the use of a ruthless tactile gaze like that "feeling eye" he

talks about in the *Reinische Elegien*.

Goethe's ideal was an art not dominated by the imagination. As early as Werther, we know what he thought about the distortions the imagination can produce in an over-excited brain. Poetry, he believed, should not be dependent on figures of speech. These describe the effect of the object but not the object itself. In a letter to Herder he suggests that "our exaggeration, mannerism, false graces, and all excesses" come from this habit of seeking similes in our own experience for the impact of the unknown object. The subjective approach must lead to exaggeration, distortion. "For when we strive after effect," he says to Herder, "we never think we can be effective enough". When Montaigne wants an accurate account of the natives of Brazil he asks to be spared the cleverness of intelligent men; give me, he says, "a man wedded to no idea". Goethe is notable for his habit of working directly from experience, not from ideas. He is aware of this and draws attention to it. As long ago as 1855, in the first biography and still one of the most interesting books about Goethe, G. H. Lewes said that in his poetry this man creates "images of the objects, rather than images of what the objects are like".

Given this attitude, the attraction of the visual arts hardly needs emphasis. The essays translated in Gage's book show the man always in pursuit of the direct approach and consequent unqualified reproduction. Everything else is affection. "It is really only possible to speak usefully of works of art in their presence," says Goethe in one of these essays, perhaps remembering Winckelmann and his method of particular appreciation. He abhors the general.

It is splendid to find in Gage's book a translation of that strangely-named essay *Nach Falcoener und über Falcoener* (1776). Robson-Scott couples this with the work on Strasbourg Cathedral and describes, then, the two most important utterances of the young Goethe on the visual arts. They may be two of the most exciting utterances on art ever published. The excitement is his; it is the excitement of discovery, vibrantly communicated. Both essays are really protests against decorum.

At his best, Goethe has no time for hallowed paths, the acceptable manner. He can be ferocious in his attacks on affectation, any gesture which betrays only the personality of the performer and tells us nothing about truth revealed through experience.

"He who wants to be general," he writes in *Falcoener*, "ends up by being nothing at all: limitation is as necessary to the artist as to anyone who wants to create something significant. Sticking to the same subjects, to the cupboard of old household utensils and marvellous rags, is what made Rembrandt unique". What could be more modern than that? He grasps at the importance of all the "unimportant" things in art; and this is as true of fiction as of painting. He could be speaking for Rilke, for Rodin, for Cézanne, when he writes to Frau von Stein from Italy at about the time *Falcoener* was published, sending her the same message: "It is always true; what makes the poet, the artist, the man, is to limit oneself, really to need, to love, to cling to one or a few objects, or see them from all sides and to become one with them." "Love gives me everything," he tells her, "and where there's no love, it's like threshing straw."

This is central. He knows it is central. Without this quality of affection for all shapes, above morality, beyond habit, the artist is paralysed into dull imitation. There is in *Falcoener* an astonishing passage. The vehemence of expression tells us as much as the words: "What the artist has not loved or does not love he should not and cannot paint. You find Rubens's art of women too fleshy? I tell you they were women, and if he had populated heaven and hell, air, earth and water with ideal forms, he would have been a pious husband and they would not have been the mighty flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone." Goethe comes back again and again to the same judgment: that he who aspires to be general ends up by being nothing. "Wer allgemein sein will, wird nichts".

Gage's book is physical having for this essay alone, while Robson-Scott's commentary on this and other essays adds considerably to our appreciation, especially if we are coming to them for

the first time. There are other treasures too. It is good to see in translation (for the first time?) part of Johannes Falk's account of a visit by the poet in his garden at Weimar in June 1809. Goethe at sixty still feels that experience can be more accurately transcribed into drawings than into words. Isn't nature itself a great complicated drawing? It must seem so to the man for whom the eye is the main organ of perception. Speaking to Falk, he anticipates twentieth-century doubts about the power of words. The philosophic Austrians are by no means the first to feel that words are only another form of decorum, to be somehow transcended if the particular is to be seized in art. "We talk too much," he says to Falk. "We ought to talk less and draw more. For my part, I should like to lose the habit of conversation and, like nature, express myself entirely in drawings."

Like nature. In front of him on the garden table, says Falk, were a small snake in a glass and coons awaiting transformation. Goethe speaks of these and of his fig-tree as representative signs ("Signaturen"). Anyone who knew how to decipher them properly would soon be able to do without all writing and speech! The more I think about it, the more speech seems to me useless, idle, I might almost say effete. . . . These are the "mute things" of Hofmannsthal's *Chandos letter*, surfaces pressing that water with a meaning he cannot comprehend or express in any language he knows. It is ironic that Goethe, whose reputation depends on his manipulation of words, can confess the superiority of wordless art. The visual arts were in no way peripheral to his activity. Their crucial fascination emerges in his words to Falk: "In drawing, the soul draws out part of its inmost being into music, and those are the greatest of nature's secrets which, for their simplicity, rest on the drawing and modelling by which they are divulged."

And so to the end. On March 22, 1832, after words had ceased, the dying man continued to trace shapes in the air with his forefinger; when he had become too weak to raise his arm he outlined figures slowly on the shawl which covered his legs.

The terracotta technique

By Caroline Elam

JOHN POPE-HENNESSY:

Luca della Robbia
288pp. with 232 illustrations, including 32 colour plates. Phaidon. £60.
0 7148 2005 9

At the end of his lifetime, the spectrum of Luca della Robbia's career could be surveyed in a visit to the crossing of Florence Cathedral: his first documented work, the marble organ gallery above the sanctuary, mirrored by that of Donatello; the reliefs of the "Resurrection" and the "Ascension" above. In the technique of enamelled terracotta which Luca introduced into Florentine sculpture, and the late sacred sculpture which he brought to perfection, the "Cantoria", where Luca absorbs without strain the lessons of Roman sarcophagi. Pope-Hennessy's exploration of such classic sources reveals the force of Antonio Manetti's characterization of Luca as "a man . . . of great intellect".

Despite the authority of this book, controversy about such a relatively ill-documented artist is bound to continue. The obligatory group of "early works" produced here to fill the gap before Luca's first documented work at the age of thirty-two are an ill-assorted bunch, and hardly confirm the otherwise convincing hypothesis of an initial training with Nanni di Banco. The pigmented stucco roundel in the Ashmolean, given to Luca by Boyle,

Victorian sentiment. John Pope-Hennessy in his monograph avoids such crude tactics, despite a wisp reference to the "eccentric introverted style" of Donatello's old age. By piling Luca's oeuvre down to fifty-four works of (almost) uniformly exceptional quality, and by establishing a chronology much more convincing than that of Marquand's catalogue of 1914, Pope-Hennessy makes his case for Luca as not only "the most popular sculptor of the fifteenth century" but also an artist of great importance.

Like those of Filippo Lippi, another great artist loved almost to death in the last century, Luca's Madonna and Child compositions, as Pope-Hennessy points out, foreshadow those of the High Renaissance. Their effortless quality is deceptive, leaving us "unaware that any problem has been posed or any question asked". This any mastery is already apparent in the "Cantoria", where Luca absorbs without strain the lessons of Roman sarcophagi. Pope-Hennessy's exploration of such classic sources reveals the force of Antonio Manetti's characterization of Luca as "a man . . . of great intellect".

Despite the authority of this book, controversy about such a relatively ill-documented artist is bound to continue. The obligatory group of "early works" produced here to fill the gap before Luca's first documented work at the age of thirty-two are an ill-assorted bunch, and hardly confirm the otherwise convincing hypothesis of an initial training with Nanni di Banco. The pigmented stucco roundel in the Ashmolean, given to Luca by Boyle,

an odd mish-mash of Ghiberti, Donatello and Masaccio, is here identified as moulded from an early work in bronze. If this derives from Luca, he made remarkable strides in the three years before the Cantoria, for the date inscribed on the back is January 1429 (1428 in Florentine style).

Of the mature works, the roundels in Brunelleschi's Pazzi Chapel present the greatest problems, which will hardly be resolved until the building history is clearer. Meanwhile it is dangerous to assume that Brunelleschi planned the filling of the roundels in advance: the swaddled *pupa* of the Innocent loggia were installed only in the 1480s, and Donatello's stuccos in the Old Sacristy are known to have displeased the architect. Pope-Hennessy makes a strong case for Brunelleschi as an *eminentia grise* in Luca's career, even suggesting that his was the brain behind glazed terracotta sculpture. The two men were certainly friends, for Manetti cites Luca not only in his life of Brunelleschi, but also as one of those who heard the *Novella del grasso legnaiuolo* from the architect's lips.

Pope-Hennessy's essentially aesthetic explanation of the invention of glazed terracotta as a sculptural medium has already been displaced by an adherent of Vasari's view of it as a cheap but durable alternative to marble and bronze. Although economies may not have provided the motive for the technique, they surely account in part for its success. The building committee of Florence Cathedral could get two terracotta reliefs (the "Ascension" and the "Resurrection") for less than the

price of one marble of equivalent size by Luca's putative master. Pope-Hennessy would like to believe that the commercial exploitation of the medium was left to Luca's nephew, Andrea, already described as *tupper*, *lucanus* in his uncle's will of 1471. In fact the documents here suggest that Luca had handed over the assets of his business ("omne creditum" — perhaps including his substantial shares in the Florentine public debt) to his nephew before making his will. Two years previously Andrea had been heavily indebted to him, presumably for the costs of materials and firing. There are no documented commissions to Luca between 1471 and his death in 1482, and there is no hard evidence that he was still at work. Thus the question of the many works disputed between Luca and Andrea should be considered against the possibility that Andrea was the only person practising "Luca's art" in the 1470s. The della Robbia workshop would provide — despite shortage of early documents — a fascinating case study of the economics of art production in the Renaissance. This will not, however, be the task of John Pope-Hennessy, who one hopes will long continue to devote himself to his preferred method of the analysis of surviving works of art.

For Pope-Hennessy is the master of the catalogue entry. His characteristic mode is a scrupulous account of the historical evidence, followed by a meticulous physical description, crowned by a flash of critical insight. This can mean rather heavy going in the text, which makes less pedagogic concessions. Those without Italian or Latin or a working knowledge of fifteenth-century Florentine institu-

tions and personalities are advised to read this book with reference works to hand. Indeed there is something ironic about such exceedingly painstaking treatment of an artist whose accessibility to "a vast public" like Renaissance art is all but a closed book" is cited as justifying this new study.

The art historical monograph, like the novel, is always in crisis; and complaints about the catalogue raisonné as a form take on a ritualistic character. The new trend is for text and catalogue to become increasingly indistinguishable until, as here, there is substantial repetition. This is in a sense more irritating because the catalogue entries are arranged to follow the thematic order of the text, not the chronology of the works, so that the latter is not readily apparent. However, the appalling price of the book is at least partially justified by the extreme beauty of the colour plates, and the sensitively chosen black-and-white photographs — some specially commissioned — are printed as well as one can expect in these unregenerate times.

In *The Tate Gallery Constable Collection* (208pp. The Tate Gallery, £15. 0 905005 93 7), Leslie Parris, Deputy Keeper of the British Collection at the Tate Gallery, has compiled a detailed catalogue of Constable's paintings in Britain. Well-known paintings such as "Platford Mill", "Chain Pier, Brighton", "Hadleigh Castle", "The Glebe Farm" and "The Valley Farm" are all reproduced in colour and there are an additional 130 black-and-white illustrations in the text.

Me and my attributes

By Sydney Shoemaker

RODERICK M. CHISHOLM:

The First Person
An Essay on Reference and Intentionality
135pp. Brighton: Harvester. £16.50.
0 7108 0077 0

Students of modern philosophy are familiar with such views as that the referent of "I" is an immaterial mind rather than a flesh and blood person (Descartes), that the self is but a "bundle of perceptions" (Hume), that "in attaching 'I' to our thoughts we designate the subject of inference only 'transcendentally'" (Kant), and that "I" is not used to refer to anything at all (Lichtenberg, Wittgenstein, Anscombe). These reflect the problematic manner in which one is presented to oneself, or (as it can seem) is not presented, in self-reference and self-attribution, i.e. in the making of judgments expressible by sentences in the grammatical first-person.

Recently a growing number of philosophers have been intrigued by a new problem, or a newly noticed aspect of the old problem, about self-attribution. The problem (brought to light by Peter Geach and, especially, Hector-Neri Castañeda) is what Professor Chisholm calls the "he himself" problem. If Tom says "I am wise", we report this by saying "Tom said that he (the himself) is wise". What proposition is it that Tom asserts and we report him as asserting? One might suppose that what we are saying is that Tom said that Tom is wise. But this won't do; Tom could say that he is wise and not be saying that Tom is wise (he is an amnesiac, and doesn't know that he is Tom), and Tom could say that Tom is wise and not be saying that he himself is wise (again, take the case in which Tom doesn't realize that he is Tom). Nor can we analyse this as simply a case of *de re* attribution. This comes out in a story, recounted by Chisholm, in which Ernst Mach tells of himself. Entering an omnibus, and seeing (in a mirror, as it turned out) a gentleman at the other end, he thought "What shabby pedagogue is that, that has just entered?" — and then realized that it was himself. Prior to this realization, Mach thought of, or concerning, the man he saw (who was himself) that he was a shabby pedagogue, but he did not thereby think that he himself was one. The problem of elucidating "the himself" arises about believing, knowing, and "propositional attitudes" generally, as well as about saying. Elizabeth Anscombe has used the problem to support the denial that "I" is used to refer. Others have held that to solve the problem one must hold that first-person sentences express "incomunicable" propositions which only the speaker can grasp.

The problem of self-attribution, and the "he himself" problem in particular, is the focal topic of Professor Chisholm's new book. Others have taken as the central case of attribution the attribution of properties to things other than oneself, and then found self-attribution puzzling because it differs strikingly from this. On Chisholm's view, this gets things exactly backwards. He takes self-attribution to be the fundamental form of attribution, and takes all other attribution to involve it. (A similar view has been developed independently by David Lewis in "Attitudes De Dicto and De Se", *Philosophical Review*, 1979.) Some of his book is devoted to developing a general account of reference and language, and an account of knowledge, to go with this view.

Belief, on this view, is always the attribution of a property to oneself — and oneself is the only thing to which one can directly attribute any property. Attributing a property to something else (indirect attribution) is a matter of attributing to oneself the property of bearing an "identity relation" to a thing bearing the property. In general, the objects of belief are properties, not propositions, although in the special case of *de dicto* belief the self-attributed

property is sometimes that of standing in a certain relation to ("conceiving in a certain way") a proposition, to which one (indirectly) attributes the property of being true.

How does this solve the "he himself" problem? If the problem is taken (as Chisholm sometimes presents it) as that of analysing the "he himself" locution using the usual logical apparatus of quantifiers and variables, it is easily solved on the assumption that direct attribution can only be to oneself: "X believes that he himself is F" can be defined as meaning "The property of being F is such that X directly attributes it to X." The problem of saying what proposition is expressed by a first-person sentence disappears; like many other sentences (all containing proper names and demonstratives), these are held not to express propositions at all. (Here Chisholm renounces his former view that individuals such as persons have individual essences, which he links with the view that there are first-person propositions.) Chisholm's view also helps to explain the difference between self-reference (with "I") and other sorts of reference. In indirect attribution the object of attribution must be picked out, on Chisholm's view, by a property that identifies it by its relation to oneself, and obviously there is no need of such a property when the object of attribution is oneself. Thus it is that "if I directly attribute a property to oneself one need not thereby single out an identifying property of oneself."

Chisholm could have strengthened his case by an appeal to a point that has been stressed by John Perry, namely that if (as seems plausible) beliefs are not to be individuated by their role in guiding behaviour, it is difficult at best to see how first-person beliefs can be individuated by propositional objects. If such beliefs have propositional as objects, it would seem, off-hand, that my belief that a bear is about to attack me has the same propositional object as your belief that a bear is about to attack me. But as Perry says ("Frege on Demonstratives", *Philosophical Review*, 1977), "When you and I both entertain the thought that I am about to be attacked by a bear, we behave differently. I roll up in a ball, you run to get help." Regarded as determinants of behaviour (as belief states), our beliefs are different. On the other hand, if each of us believes that he is about to be attacked, each rolls up in a ball; we have the same

belief state, even though the propositional objects are different (one proposition being about me and the other being about you). On the sameness of belief state and sameness of object of belief line up nicely: in the first version of the bear example you and I self-ascribe different properties (I self-ascribe the property of being about to be attacked, you self-ascribe the property of standing in a certain identifying relation to someone who is about to be attacked, while in the second version of the example we self-ascribe the same property).

There is some uncertainty about what status Chisholm wants to assign to the principle P1, central to his account, which says that the object of direct attribution (what the property is attributed to) is always its subject (what does the attributing). Since he says that the expression "directly attributes" is unqualified, and since he puts forward P1 as a "principle about the nature of attribution", it would seem that he regards it as a substantive claim. This makes it seem a surprising thesis about a notion (direct attribution) which we are presumed already to have; and so regarded, P1 is likely to seem counterintuitive. But surely "directly attributes" is in fact a technical term, which we cannot be assumed to understand just because we understand "attributes". And sometimes (eg p114) Chisholm writes as if P1 were something he had stipulated as true, and which thus amounted to a partial definition of "directly attributes". If the truth of P1 is made a matter of stipulation, then the substantive claim will not be P1 but rather the claim that all attribution involves direct attribution in the way Chisholm describes. Alternatively, direct attribution could be defined as attribution that does not involve other attribution in the way Chisholm thinks attribution to oneself involves attribution to oneself, and P1 could then be advanced as a substantive thesis. Either way, the notion of direct attribution will not be the primitive, undefined concept Chisholm sometimes presents it as being. And explicit recognition that the concept is a technical one may go some way (I am not sure it can go all the way) towards dispelling the impression that Chisholm's thesis is counterintuitive.

There is much of considerable interest in Chisholm's book besides his explicit treatment of the "he himself" problem. The linguistic expression of

attribution is treated in two chapters, one on demonstratives and one on proper names. In the latter Chisholm denies that names have "attributive" senses — senses that contribute to the content of an attribution — but allows that they have "demonstrative" senses, determined by what identifying relation the speaker has in mind. In addition, each name has a "secondary sense", which is said to be a property of the speaker, namely that of using the name in the way in which he ordinarily uses it. Chisholm uses the latter notion to deny with "negative existential propositions" (eg, "Moses did not exist") and with a puzzle about belief raised by Kripke. This chapter also contains an interesting attempt to explain the notion of a rigid designator without invoking possible worlds.

Several chapters deal with epistemological matters. Notably Chisholm has developed elsewhere, such as in the first version of the bear example, a "self-presenting" view of belief as the self-attribution of a property. There is a discussion of self-consciousness and the unity of consciousness, and there is a sketch of a theory of perception. There is also an interesting attempt to reconcile "foundationalist" and "coherence" perspectives on knowledge and justification. The epistemology and the metaphysics are brought together in the final chapter, entitled "Knowledge and Belief De Re". This is followed by an Appendix on "Ontology of States of Affairs", in which Chisholm offers, among other things, a reductive analysis of possible worlds in terms of states of affairs.

A central theme running through the book is the "primacy of the intentional". At least part of what Chisholm means by this is a thesis he has commendably championed, against the prevailing fashion, for some time, namely that facts about language are to be explicated in terms of facts about intentional mental states, and not vice versa.

I will mention just a few of my doubts and disagreements. It seems to be presupposed by Chisholm throughout the book that if one attributes a property to something other than oneself there must be a unique identifying description (a relational one), actually satisfied by that thing, under which one conceives it. This is denied by many recent writers on reference (especially propo-

sitions of "causal chain" theories), and one wonders how Chisholm would respond to the counterexamples that have been thought to refute it — eg Kripke's Gödel-Schmidt case (in which someone refers to Gödel, although what he takes to be Gödel's identifying properties belong instead to Schmidt). Also questionable, I think, is Chisholm's claim that the property "being appeared ready to" (ie, I take it, having a visual experience of a certain qualitative or phenomenal character) is "self-presenting" in the sense that, necessarily, if one has this property and considers one's having it, one would attribute the property to oneself. This presupposes, implausibly, I think, that it is not logically possible that one should have the concept of this property, and be able to refer to it, but not know (eg, not remember) what it is like to have this property, and so should not recognize an instantiation of it in oneself for what it is when one considers it. Even more questionable is Chisholm's claim that we get the concept of sadness by being sad, and, similarly, that we get the concept of a self by being a self, and being a self are self-presenting. Either Chisholm's definition of "self-presenting" is to be understood as implying that nothing can have a self-presenting property without having the concept of that property, or it is not. If the latter, then even given that being sad is a self-presenting property, the fact that someone has been sad is obviously no explanation of his having the concept of sadness. If the former, then it seems to me that (1) there are good reasons for not allowing that being sad is a self-presenting property (on this understanding of what that involves), and that (2) even if we do allow this, it will still be questionable that we get the concept by having the property, since it may be instead that we must have the concept as a precondition of having the property. The same goes for the property of being a "self" and the concept of this.

Proofreading aside (misprints abound), this book is of the high quality one expects from its author. The writing is, on the whole, admirably clear — although because of the complexity of the content, and the sparseness of the style (Chisholm is no spendthrift with words), it sometimes makes an appreciable demand on the reader's effort and attention. Chisholm has given us a rewarding and provocative book.

The ways of creation

By Richard Swinburne

THOMAS F. TORRANCE:

Divine and Contingent Order
162pp. Oxford University Press. £9.50.
0 19 826558 2

The Universe is contingent; in some sense it just happens to be. But it has a rational order contingent upon rational man. Its contingent existence would be totally incomprehensible unless we supposed that it derived that existence from a transcendent being, God, who created it freely "out of nothing"; and its conformity to order would be incomprehensible unless we supposed that God had given it that order. The theme of Thomas F. Torrance's book is to expound these ideas of Judeo-Christian theology and to show how they were available to facilitate the development of Western empirical science. If you suppose the Universe to be necessary, you will think that a priori reasoning will reveal the laws of nature; and clearly quite a lot of Greek, scholastic and medieval science was conducted on that basis. Whereas if you suppose the Universe to be contingent, made the way it is through God's free choice, then empirical in-

vestigation alone will reveal the way it is.

Professor Torrance holds that this truth, which wielded some influence in the fifth and sixth centuries AD, was implicit in the practice of post-Galilean science. Because nothing in God's essence but his free choice alone made the world the way it is, our science need take no account of God in its study of contingent order; yet reflection on that contingent order ought nevertheless to lift the mind towards God, its source. However, the structure of the Universe as pictured by Newton might lead men to overlook its contingency. A Universe boundless in time and space with particles interacting mechanically at a distance might (falsely) suggest to man that it was self-dependent. However, Torrance holds, the Universe as pictured by contemporary science reveals more evidently its contingency. Quantum Theory and the theory of evolution help to show the evolving nature of the Universe, not adequately captured in any formalism. But it is above all Relativity Theory which impresses Torrance. This, he holds, proclaims "a finite but unbounded universe", in which "Space and Time are no longer regarded as empty or unvarying containers but as relations intrinsic to the on-going contingent processes of the Universe".

Torrance here seems to read far too much into Relativity Theory. That the Universe is spatially finite is no part of the General Theory of Relativity, but an additional speculation by Einstein for which subsequent inquiry has provided little support. Likewise the General Theory does not commit itself about the temporal finitude of the Universe. Recent evidence about the "big bang" certainly suggests a beginning, but there is little scientific evidence of an end of the Universe.

The book has four chapters, three of which were delivered as separate lectures; they are "intended to build up a progressive, if somewhat spiral argument". Torrance presents, with the flowing words which befit a Scottish divine, a doctrine well grounded in Christian thought, a constructive way for the theologian to regard science, a helpful attitude for the scientist to hold towards science and theology. But I do not find very much "argument" in this book. There are too many jargon words — the Universe is said to be "characterized throughout not by a static but by a dynamic stability, not by closed rigid structures but by open-ordered structures . . . [by] truth which defies complete mathematical formalization". But what do these clear-sounding phrases mean in clear terms, and what is the precise sci-

tific evidence that things are thus? We are not told. There is no clear account here of contingency which faces up to the philosophical difficulties in this notion. Presumably the claim is more than just that the Universe is logically contingent (ie, that it is not logically necessary that there be a Universe). And if "Space and Time belong to the created order of things" what does it mean to say that God is "outside Time"? On these matters there is a considerable modern philosophical literature, in which Torrance does not refer. He is a writer sensitive to the general trends of philosophical and scientific thought, but he does not produce clear and careful arguments to expound and justify a position.

The second volume of *Readings in Philosophy of Psychology*, edited by Ned Block, has just been published (366pp. Methuen. £12.95. 0 16 746004). It is divided into four parts: "Mental Representation", including contributions by Peter Church, Gilbert Harman, Jerry Fodor, Daniel Dennett, and Harry Field; "Imagery" with papers by Georges Rey, Dennett, Fodor, and Zenon Pylyshyn; "The Subject Matter of Grammar", with papers by Fodor, Stephen Stich, J. J. Katz, and Chomsky; and "Innate Ideas" (including three papers each by Chomsky and Hilary Putnam).

Fraternities of the savourless

By Stephen Fender

CHARLES G. NORRIS:

Salt: or The Education of Griffith Adams
365pp. Southern Illinois University Press, £9.
0 8043 1011 2

On first hearing of this novel by the brother of Frank Norris, the American naturalist author of *McTeague* who planned an "Epic of the Wheat", I thought it might be a story of the salt trade, one culminating in a melodramatic confrontation somewhere on the glaring evaporation pans in the southern lobe of San Francisco Bay. But "salt" refers to Matthew V. 13: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" First published in 1918, in the same year as appeared the better known education of another Adams, *Salt* is now reissued in facsimile in the "Lost American Fiction Series", edited by Matthew J. Bruccoli.

The salt that has lost his savour is the American upper middle class, which should be setting an example to the world but is instead misdirect-

ing its youth to clear its way through university, business and life in general. Griffith Adams, the son of a remote Brahmin father and of a pretty mother who alternately ignores him and covers him in kisses, is sent away to boarding school at an early age and winds up at an indifferently university in the Midwest. There he joins a fraternity, cuts his classes and fails his finals. Back in New York, he goes to work for a large railroad, where he learns mainly how to fix contracts and arrange perks of office.

When new management sets about flushing the corruption out of the passenger department, Griffith twines on his colleagues and is fired for his trouble. By this time he has married a passionate but commonplace girl who isn't up to much in the way of housekeeping. When she gets pregnant, Griffith is reduced to working as a companion to a wealthy invalid industrialist. The birth of a son and the death of his wife focus Griffith's mind. Now his fortunes change; a nurse at the lying-in hospital takes Griffith and the baby into her large immigrant family. Griffith is sent by the old industrialist to learn the wool business; he triumphs through adversity and hard work and marries a sensible girl.

Does *Salt* deserve to have been lost? Yes, on the whole. First, there are problems with the prose - some of them syntactical fribbles are several dangling participles, others to do with words that occasionally seem to have been strung together by a Martian using Webster's dictionary, as in: "He derived a certain monetary satisfaction and pleasure from these consultations".

Writing like this might be tolerable in Dreiser or C.G.'s brother, Frank, where the narrative struggles to achieve a scientific detachment in order to illustrate one or another rule of nature. The satire on Griffith's college education is convincing and, now that fraternities are once again a power on American campuses, timely. After four years of the time-wasting intricacies of fraternity living - the concern to get "pledged" to the most fashionable house, the apprenticeship and initiation, the endless round of beer parties and quasi-liturgical ceremonies - Griffith is invited to a professor's house, where he meets some students who never managed, or wanted, to join a fraternity. They drink and tell jokes, too, but also read books, discuss politics, play and sing music, recite poetry.

It is a nicely delayed revelation of an alternative life - a world of the mind which can be found at any large American university, however unfashionable. Yet towards the end of the novel, Griffith begins to draw the lessons of his miseducation. He reflects that "I never was taught a profession or a trade. I spent four years at college getting culture and instead of getting it, I lost what little I had." Later he tells Rosa, the girl who is to become his second wife, that there is no point in college unless students can be taught "something definite like engineering or electricity or law", and she chimes in with "Book learning is an excellent thing... but it is not... so important as learning of life itself." Ho hum. The fact that Griffith has done no studying (even electricity), that culture had revealed itself to him as something more than table manners and going to the opera, and finally that the wise Rosa herself was once at the hub of the corrupt passenger department, and only left when she got fired along with the rest - all this seems to have got lost somewhere in the narrative.

Akingside the slimmed-down prose of *This Side of Paradise*, published only a year later though not without

its own ambiguous responses to fashion in education, *Salt* reads like a grab-bag of turn-of-the-century American fiction. But its literary shortcomings are another means of charting what goes wrong in the course of the book. Early on these are from realistic or naturalistic novels: Griffith's father comes out of *The Europeans*, his mother from *What Missie Knew*; some of the descriptions of Boston and its environs suggest W. D. Howells; two characters down on their luck borrow mannerisms from Dreiser's *Hurricane*. Then comes a pivotal point: when Griffith's first father-in-law is fired from the railroad, "some serious chemical change begins" to take place in his brain from that day. Here naturalism reverts to the gothic. From here on, *Salt* is all romance of one kind or another, whether dim novel melodrama or Horatio Alger story. Even the Swiss family who take Griffith in, look after his baby and provide his second wife, represent an element of fantasy. Coming from somewhere within the Basle-Lucerne ellipse, they combine the virtues of the Germans and the Italians: they are hard-working and practical, cook well, love babies, and are all too obviously collected as a foil to the savourless salt.

Getting to Go and beyond

By Craig Brown

CARLOS CASTANEDA:

The Eagle's Gift
316pp. Hodder and Stoughton, £6.95.
0 340 25882 9

The British have a lamentable record in their response to unorthodox religion, as the titers from the back of the stalls that greet Mr Bernard Levin's every flight into spiritual ecstasy have again reminded us. The adherents of these vibrant new cults would reply to the scoffers that spiritual truth can be glimpsed only by the adventurous and energetic, and that energy must remain unorthodox. If it is to keep sparkling, so it is with a timid acknowledgment of what he comes of the mockers that a book with chapter titles such as "The Fixation of the Second Attention", "Quasi Memories of the Oilier Self", "The Right and the Left Side Awareness" and "The Not-Dolings of Silvio Manuel" should be approached. Just because the language of the spiritual voyage appears to be better suited to a handbook for apprentice inner-city councilors than to no reason to discredit the meaning behind the words.

This is the sixth of Castaneda's supposedly factual accounts of his journeys into the unknown. His introduction informs us that he is, by profession, an anthropologist, but that his work studying the uses of medical plants among the Indians of the Southwest and northern Mexico became so engrossing that "the compelling inner forces... derailed my intellectual pursuit and turned me into a participant". To such an extent that, "the belief system I wanted to study swallowed me, and in order for me to proceed with my serenity, I have to make an extraordinary daily payment, my life as a man in this world".

The Eagle's Gift starts with Castaneda's mentors don Juan Matus and don Genaro Flores, saying good-bye and leaving him. Later, Castaneda goes back to Mexico and meets up with five women and four men who are also in pursuit of awareness. They agree, perhaps wisely, that "The Nagual (don Juan Matus) told every one of us the same things... The problem is that every one of us was not listening intently, or rather every one of us listened to him in his own way, and heard what he wanted to hear. Don Juan's proclamations tended to lay themselves open to misinterpretation, as is so often true of the bounding metaphors employed by the pro-

fessionally holy: "The Nagual said that losing the human form is like a spiral. It gives you the freedom to remember and this in turn makes you free".

In the first half of the book, the ten who hope to generate stumble around on a rocky path to self-awareness, never quite sure who is who or what they are there for. The events we saw all the time from questioning conversations to aggressive punch-ups, both verbal and physical. One moment the characters will be talking of "personalistic interpretations" and "Non-ordinary reality" and the next tension wells up and "I grabbed her by the hair and twirled her around. I caught myself at the apex of my wrath and stopped. I apologized and hugged her". But the sceptical reader, particularly the reader new to Castaneda, will soon tire of these querulous people, and the mysteries they must plough through before they can understand

the mystery of the mystery. If Carlos Castaneda sees himself as the recording angel, his descriptive language betrays little sense of excitement or enlightenment: "Everything was there in the foreground and I had no volition to construct an adequate screening procedure".

At the end of the first half of the book, Castaneda writes that "There were three subjects, three questions, that summated all of our concerns. Who was don Juan and who were his companions? What had they really done to us? And where had all of them gone?" More comparable to a mishapen and deceitful detective story than to a work of bizarre and overpowering strength as dramatic and moving as it is deep and thought-provoking, *The Eagle's Gift* then informs the reader of the precepts upon which the first half of the book was constructed:

The power that governs the des-

tiny of all living beings is called the Eagle not because it is an eagle or has anything to do with an eagle, but because it appears to the seer as an immeasurable jet-black eagle, standing erect as an eagle stands, its height reaching to infinity... The Eagle is devouring the awareness of all the creatures that, alive on earth a moment before and now dead, have floated to the Eagle's beak, like a ceaseless swarm of fireflies, to meet their own, their reason for having had life. The Eagle disentangles these tiny flames, lays them flat, as a tanner stretches out a hide, and then consumes them; for awareness is the Eagle's food.

Herein lies another reason to provide the titterer's scorn: if, as the next contractual clause of the Eagle's Testament has it, only he who acknowledges the Truth, and throws away all earthly ties to materiality, "has the power to keep the flames of

awareness, the power to disobey the summons to die and be consumed", then, for those who have yet to bump into and be influenced by a Magdal, the future is bleak enough for laughter, a laughter enriched by the similarity of the Eagle's rules for eternal life to the rules of Waddington's entertaining, if dispiriting, game, Monopoly: "The eight female warriors are divided into two bands, which are called the right and left planets. The right planet is made up of four stalkers, the left of four dreamers. The warriors of each planet were taught by the Eagle the rule of their specific task: stalkers were taught stalking; dreamers were taught dreaming", and so on.

The rest of the book describes the advancement of the majority to Go and beyond, whilst poor Castaneda, at one time in line for the post of Banker, is sent to jail, destined to write the interminable true story for the benefit of us fireflies.

The goat-girl from Agreste

By John Parker

JORGE AMADO:

Tieta
Translated by Barbara Shelby Mercelolo
671pp. Souvenir Press, £7.95.
0 285 62507 1

When *Tieta do Agreste* appeared in Brazil, in 1977, the Rio satirical weekly *Pasquim* adapted its own laudatory political slang to comment: "We're with you all the way, Jorge, but not to the point of reading it." This probably expressed a common reaction among Brazilian intellectuals to Amado's lost few novels, but the truth is that many academic critics in Brazil refuse to take him seriously at all. He is, nevertheless, the country's most popular living novelist, several of his books having gone through more than thirty editions, as well as being translated into most major European languages on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Essentially a popular writer, even a populist, in the 1930s his left-wing views led him to produce a series of proletarian novels, portraying life among the lower classes of Bahia's capital city, Salvador, and embodying a growth of political awareness which was probably more a reflection of his own ideological development than an observed reality.

During the most oppressive years

of the Vargas era, Amado turned to chronicling past history, in novels charting the rise and fall of pioneer landowners and cocoa planters in the south of Bahia. But in 1954, following a period of exile spent in Eastern Europe and Asia (Amado had been a communist deputy when the party was outlawed in 1946), he published a three volume political saga, *Os subterrâneos da liberdade* (Freedom Underground). This piece of socialist realism, depicting party activists struggling against the vicious repression of the state police, described scenes of torture and set them in stark contrast to the moral degradation of a corrupt bourgeoisie.

A mere four years later, however, the widely acclaimed *Gabriel, cravo e canela* (Gabriel, Clove and Cinnamon) revealed a shift of emphasis. Brazil was into the heady days of Kubitschek's presidency, and the novel, though set in 1925, revolves around the theme of progress, showing that the old-style backlands violence was out of date in a changing, increasingly democratic society.

Amado also sought to introduce formal modifications, for the publication of Guimarães Rosa's great novel, *Grande Sertão*, in 1956 had confirmed the triumph of the new aestheticism. True to his populist approach and sense of the past, he chose a mixture of Iberian picaresque and the *feuilleton* type novel. To hold together this often prolix and potentially formless genre, he created central characters like Gabriel, often at the periphery of middle-class

society, which their independence, ingenuity and natural sensuality allow them to penetrate on their own terms, subverting its precarious values and uncovering its moral hypocrisy.

These characters are supported, not by peasants or urban workers, but by representatives of the underworld of Salvador - drunks, prostitutes, pimps and vagrants, all of whom Amado idealizes as the anarchic opposition to the petty bourgeoisie and the system of law and order this class so stoutly upholds. Such, roughly, is the artistic synthesis Amado has deployed, with varying degrees of success, in a series of novels published over the last twenty years, most of them made available in English in Alfred Knopf's Borzoi Books editions. Souvenir Press now proposes to make them available again in this country, starting with *Tieta*. Barbara Shelby makes a competent job of rendering the racy original, producing effective solutions for some of the trickier turns of phrase and offering a highly readable version.

Tieta, short for Antonieta, is the name of the book's central character, whose return to her native Agreste, a forgotten dorp on the Bahia-Sergipe coastal border, polarizes the two main strands of the plot. Driven from home as an adolescent because of her sexual mores, *Tieta* has worked her way up from where to sophisticated Madame Antoinette, owner of São Paulo's most exclusive

brothel. She has retained her natural goodness, however, and sends regular monthly cheques to Agreste, to a family blissfully ignorant of the source of their fairy godmother's wealth. Her triumphant return to Agreste coincides with the arrival of a multinational company in search of a convenient site on which to erect a factory for production of an industrial chemical, one known to trail ecological disaster in its wake. From here on fantasy takes charge.

Tieta, as a child, was a goat-girl. In the process of rediscovering the natural simplicity of her beginnings, she seduces her seventeen-year-old seminarian nephew, dedicated from birth to the priesthood, and turns him into a randy Lotbario. But such behaviour seems wholesome when compared to the implied degradation, or prostitution, of the female employees of the multinational, who are depicted as the ambitious town-clerk of Agreste.

Amado aims good-bourneous barbs at religious hypocrisy, priestly celibacy, the perversions of the powerful and the perverting of the able to dislike or even sufficiently disapprove of his villains, while his unremitting *machismo* dictates that woman's place is in bed or among the sand dunes of Mangue Seco beach. No doubt this will have appealed to the average American male, as well as providing a comforting picture of Brazil as tropical paradise.

Brooding on the unthinkable

By Alan Bold

BETH GUTCHEON:

Silk Missing
256pp. Michael Joseph, £6.95.
0 7181 2066 3

Beth Gutcheon is a thirty-six-year-old Radcliffe graduate with one previous book (*The New Girls*) and one to her credit. These credentials link her to the heroine of her new novel, Susan Selky, a Harvard professor in her mid-thirties, who has likewise published one book and produced one son. As the novel opens Susan is alive and well and living in Boston (where Beth Gutcheon once worked for a publisher); suddenly her son disappears, her world is plunged into darkness and she endures an appalling emotional crisis. I believe the intense brooding quality of the subsequent narrative is a result of Ms Gutcheon's conviction that what happens in her fiction could happen in fact to any American mother living in a big city. The anguish inflicted on Susan Selky is something even all-American moms must be prepared for. Ms Gutcheon has used her instincts as a novelist to think the unthinkable through to a surprising conclusion.

A fast literary worker, Ms Gutcheon instantly puts the reader in possession of the main facts. Susan has separated from her husband Graham and has shifted all her attention to her son Alex, who is six and already aware of the things that really matter to his age-group. He is familiar with television, he identifies with popular American heroes like Batman and Spiderman, and is carefully conditioned to accept that it is morally wrong to take lollipops from passing strangers. In Susan Selky's anthropocentric world he is, though

diminutive, the Big Man, and his conspicuous absence is what determines the tone of the book. As just another schoolkid Alex attracted little attention until as a potential victim he is transformed; he becomes a celebrity worthy of the attention of the media and of so-called friends. Susan finds there are other males in her life besides Alex and all of them inadequate. Although in no sense a feminist novel, this book is littered with asides which suggest an intelligent woman being taken for granted in a society that still demands a degree of conformity from a damsel, or even career-woman, in distress. Enough, as Susan Selky is repeatedly advised, is enough.

Susan's husband Graham is not so much a male chauvinist pig as a bit of a rat. When Alex goes missing Graham is having casual sex with a nurse whose name escapes him. Otherwise he divides his time between Boston University (where he teaches English) and his girlfriend Naomi, who turns out to be a younger version of Susan. He is, in almost every sense, the opposite of Susan. She is deep, he is shallow; she is concerned, he is indifferent. In the bottle for human decency she is the natural, but not inevitable, loser. Susan's agony becomes more and more intense as she looks for some kind of assistance to help her survive the various assaults on her sensitivity. Most of her women friends make a great show of caring but actually lose interest as Alex becomes less of a living reality than the poster that proclaims him a missing person. After some friends leave her home, Susan heard them pick up their normal preoccupations like so many briefcases checked at the door, which was apparently where daily life resumed.

Beth Gutcheon has borrowed the

crude framework of the thriller and used it as the basis of an elaborately patterned study of an individual response to extreme psychological pressure. Assisting Susan is Al Menetti, the detective assigned to the case. He regularly confines vast experience with omniscience and assumes, with almost disastrous results, that his predictable methods are more reliable than Susan's intuitive reading of a painfully human situation she considers to be unique. While Susan is driven to despair, Menetti goes through the investigative motions and comes up with a solution that will both satisfy the media and rid him of a case that has disturbed his domestic routine. This involves an outrageously camp character whose brand of homosexuality is added to the already considerable criminal repertoire featured in the novel; little wonder Ms Gutcheon had to obtain "technical information and material" to compose this book.

Eventually, of course, all is revealed, but Ms Gutcheon sustains the suspense to the final page. She is a clever writer whose technical assurance allows her to get away with occasional moments of verbal overkill - as when we are told that a moment on the telephone "took such a long time that... Susan died and went to hell and came back a soul in torment". I am reliably informed that Ms Gutcheon is professionally "interested in both arts and crafts", and, appropriately enough, she uses arty-crafty images, as witness this sartorial simile: "She'd been wielding the phone like a tailor with a pair of scissors, deftly slicing the oblivious cities of Boston and Cambridge into pockets of people who would care, or at least know, about Alex." This novel has a disturbing theme and a strange cast of characters; the humanity of the finished product is a tribute to Ms Gutcheon's considerable artistry.

Losing life's flash

By Linda Taylor

ANDREA BREESE:

Setting Out
193pp. John Clare, £6.95.
0 906549 21 3

In *Fra Lippo Lippi*, Browning revealed the objectives of his own art through those of the painter: "Can't I take breath" says Lippi "and try to add life's flash". Andrea Breese, herself once a graphic designer and typographer, implicitly recognises in this first novel the connection between drawing and writing. Sorrel, the narrator and heroine, is a so art student and, when she tries to nullify the pain of an embarrassing evening in the pub by drawing a sequence of character sketches, Andrea Breese allows her some thoughtful detail in which to describe what she is doing:

I was anxious to... recapture the constant movement and interplay of the characters... I hit on the idea of keeping myself as the central but more or less unseen, pivot of the action of each scene... My objective... was to depict the slow disintegration of this evening.

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An admirably Hogarthian "progress" which Sorrel, we hear, executes brilliantly, thus winning herself a place at a London art college.

The novel's progress, though, follows the example of the industrious rather than the idle apprentice. As Sorrel proceeds from northern obscurity to London ignominy to recognition as a designer in a publishing house, good humoured perseverance is seen to triumph. The characters are a somewhat predictable 1950s set whose "interplay" has the familiar resonance of the kitchen-sink drama. Good-hearted working class northerners merge into students and likeable Londoners; the heroine, meanwhile, is both sensitive to and held back by her role.

Sorrel is plain, shy and self-conscious, with a strong belief in her inadequacies as a person and as an artist. It takes the middle-class promptings of her dying, asthmatic friend, Elizabeth, and the acerbic, idiosyncratic publisher, Rutherford, to make her believe in her own work and to do something about it.

Andrea Breese is good at vignettes: the life-model's mountainous mauve and pink flesh; the attempted intercourse in the woodshed perpetrated by the businessman, Mr Blakely, on an unsuspecting Sorrel; the friendly vulgarity of the *Hand in Glove* pub.

But when it comes to character analysis and development, she is weaker. Sorrel says that in her drawings she is going to "indicate my own presence by a hand, or a glass, or a silhouette portrait in the foreground, or even by just a glance in my direction from one of the others". The novel, though, misses this subtlety; the heroine's presence is indicated by an ingenious close-up. Sorrel's a nice enough girl but a bit too on complicity to benefit very much from this kind of exposure.

As painter/writer, Andrea Breese's ideas are fuzzy where they ought to be sharp and strong. When Aunt Emily, for instance, is confronted by the news of her son having to get

married, she is seen knitting baby clothes with her mouth "lightly closed". This nice glimpse of Aunt Emily's character is fudged, however, by an overdose of adjectives: "Aunt Emily was heartbroken; which did not, however, detract from the fervour with which she was knitting a tiny snowy white matinee coat in an intricate feathery pattern."

In *Setting Out* Andrea Breese attempts a mixture of sentiment and realism that never quite marry. While she identifies, in her subject matter, the strength of the half dozen fine strokes that make a good drawing, she rarely brings off the similarly concise and vivid prose style necessary for a vital novel. There's a lot of breath, but life's flash is all too often muted.

Criminal proceedings

A *Sort of Samurai* (168pp. Secker and Warburg, £6.95, 0 436 27602 3) is another oriental, but not too inscrutable, mystery from James Melville, with Superintendent Onni of the Hyogo Prefectural Police looking into an accident apparently caused by a minor earthquake. Narrative slightly diffuse, but fascinating details of Japanese life are described with the kind of loving care that would be put into the pruning of a bonsai tree.

In Jonathan Gash's *The Vatican Rip* (231pp. Collins, £6.50, 0 00 231868 7), antique dealer Lovejoy, the expert with the infallible nose for the genuine article, is blackmailed into going to Rome to rip off an antique that belongs to the Pope. It's all excitement from there on in, as Lovejoy treads delicately along a dangerous path, strewn thickly, as always, with highly available ladies. The usual East Anglian background is sidily missed, and it was perhaps a mistake, too, to bring crime into the centre of the stage rather than leaving it in the wings, as in Lovejoy's earlier novels, but the book is still highly ingenious, vividly enjoyable, and stuffed with a magpie's selection of antique information.

T. J. Blyden

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